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THE

PRACTICAL EXPOSITOR:

OR, AN

EXPOSITION

OF THE

NEW TESTAMENT,

IN THE FORM OF A

PARAPHRASE;

WITH OCCASIONAL NOTES IN THEIR PROPER PLACES FOR FURTHER EXPLICATION,

AND

SERIOUS RECOLLECTIONS AT THE CLOSE OF EVERY CHAPTER.

TO WHICH IS ADDED,

AN ALPHABETICAL TABLE OF THE PRINCIPAL THINGS CONTAINED IN THE PARAPHRASE, ESPECIALLY IN THE NOTES.

For the Use of the FAMILY and CLOSET.

By JOHN GUYSE, *D. D.*

THE FIFTH EDITION.

VOL. VI.

CONTAINING

THE GENERAL EPISTLES OF JAMES, PETER, JOHN, AND JUDE; AND THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE.

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THE

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To comfort the church under the melancholy repreſentation, which had been made in the foregoing viſions of the 1260 years of the witneſſes prophefying in ſackcloth, of the church's being in the wilderneſs, and of the reign of antichriſt, a chorus of the heavenly church is introduced in another viſion, as celebrating the praiſes of God, in the preſence of the Lamb, for their happineſs, who, as a virgin-company, had continued faithful to Chriſt and his cauſe under that period, 1,—5. Then follows a viſion of three angels; one proclaiming, in a way of prediction, the everlaſting goſpel, which ſhould be preached at the Reformation; another, the downfal of *Babylon*, the ſame with the antichriſtian-beaſt; and a third, the dreadful wrath of God, which ſhould be poured out upon the worſhippers of the beaſt, together with the bleſſedneſs of them that die in the Lord, 6,—13. To this is added a viſion of Chriſt himſelf with a ſharp ſickle in his hand, and of an angel crying to him to execute judgment on his enemies, as ripe for deſtruction, under the emblem of a harveſt ripe for cutting down, which he accordingly did, 14,—16. And a viſion of two angels more; one of which had alſo a ſharp ſickle; and the other cried to him to proceed to further executions of judgments, without delay, upon the antichriſtian party, that had filled up the meaſure of their iniquities, which was done with dreadful vengeance, under the emblem of a vintage fully ripe, and trodden in the wine-preſs of God's wrath, 17,—20. p. 299.

CHAP. XV.

A viſion of ſeven angels, having the ſeven laſt plagues, follows, by way of ſolemn preface to the execution of them, as to be made upon the beaſt; and a ſong of praiſe is ſung by the church, which obtained victory over him, 1,—4. Then the temple in heaven is opened, from whence the ſeven angels come out with the ſeven plagues; and to them one of the living creatures gives ſeven golden vials full of the wrath of God, that they might be ready to pour them out in their order: Upon which, the temple was filled with an inacceſſible cloud of glory, 5,—8. p. 308.

CHAP. XVI.

The ſeven angels are ordered to pour out their ſeven vials of the wrath of God on the antichriſtian-beaſt and all its ſupports, 1. The firſt vial is poured out on the earth with grievous ſores, ſignifying great troubles through the *Romiſh* community, between the year 830 and 988, 2. The ſecond on the ſea, which is turned into blood, ſignifying a great effuſion of blood in the holy wars, between the year 1040 and 1190, 3. The third on the rivers and fountains, which became blood, ſignifying civil wars in the papacy, between the year 1200 and 1371, 4,—7. The fourth on the ſun, which ſcorched men, ſignifying wars through the contentions of Popes for the papal chair; and the deſtruction of the eaſtern empire, between the year 1378 and 1540, 8, 9. The fifth on the ſeat of the beaſt, ſignifying the eſtabliſhment of the Proteſtant-reformation, which was a great ſhock to Popery, between the year 1530 and 1650, 10, 11. The ſixth on the great river *Euphrates*, ſignifying ſome terrible invaſion of the Pope's dominion, from its eaſtern borders, which ſeems, in order of time, to be yet to come, 12,—16. And the ſeventh on the air, the ſeat of *Satan*'s power, which ſhall iſſue in the total deſtruction of all antichriſtian-enemies, 17,—21. p 312.

CHAP. XVII.

One of the ſeven angels, which had the ſeven vials, explains the meaning of the former viſion of the antichriſtian-beaſt that was to reign 1260 years, and then to be deſtroyed, whom he deſcribes under the figure of a great whore ſitting on many waters, and on a ſcarlet beaſt, attired in purple and ſcarlet and other deckings, and bearing the name of Myſtery, *Babylon* the Great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth, 1,—6. Interprets the myſtery of the woman, and the beaſt that had ſeven heads and ten horns, and of the many waters on which ſhe ſat, who is overcome by the Lamb, and brought to condign

 puniſhment

punishment by means of the ten kings that had supported her, 7,—18. p. 323.

CHAP. XVIII.

Another angel from heaven proclaims the fall of mystical *Babylon*, 1,—3. And another voice from heaven admonishes the people of God to come out of her, lest, partaking of her sins, they partake also of her plagues, 4,—8. Represents the lamentation of kings, merchants, and mariners over her, 9,—19. And calls upon the church to rejoice in God's taking righteous vengeance upon her, who had slain the saints; and whose utter and irrecoverable ruin is signified by the emblem of a millstone thrown with violence by a mighty angel into the sea, 20,—24. p. 332.

CHAP. XIX.

The church both in heaven and on earth triumph, and praise the Lord for his righteous judgments upon the great whore of *Babylon*, and for the honour of their own espousal to Christ, 1,—8. An angel pronounces them blessed, and refuses the worship which *John* offered him, 9, 10. Then follows another vision of Christ, as going forth on a white horse at the head of his army, which is also mounted on white horses, to make war against the beast and his armies, which are utterly and miserably destroyed, 11,—21. p. 341.

CHAP. XX.

An angel descends from heaven, who binds and shuts up Satan in the bottomless pit for 1000 years, *in the fourth period*, during which the church reigns with Christ in a glorious state on earth, 1,—6. Satan is loosed again for a little while to deceive the nations once more, *in the fifth period*, and, gathering all his forces together, makes his last effort against Christ and his church, which issues in their own final and irretrievable overthrow, and in the eternal torment of the devil, together with the beast and the false prophet, 7,—10. Hereupon the general judgment of the great day is described, in which all the dead are gathered before Christ on his throne, *in the sixth period*, the books are opened, and they are judged; and all, that are not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented for ever, 11,—15. p. 351.

CHAP. XXI.

In consequence of the final judgment, the blessed state of the church-triumphant is represented in general, under the figures of a new heaven and new earth, and of the new *Jerusalem, in the seventh period*, where God dwells, banishes all sorrow from his people, and makes them completely happy, in opposition to the doleful state of the wicked, 1,—8. And is more particularly described in its heavenly original, lustre, and glory, secure defence, and bright ornaments, under the figures of precious stones, high walls, 12 gates, guarded by 12 angels, and 12 foundations inscribed with the names of 12 apostles, 9,—14. In its beautiful structure, under the figure of an exceeding large city four square, and consisting of the richest and finest materials, 15,—21. In its consummate felicity, as irradiated with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, exclusive of all the comforts of this world, which are figured out by the light of the sun and moon, 22, 23. And in the free access of vast multitudes, of all nations and degrees, through the open gates of this city, the glory of which will swallow up all earthly honours, and the inhabitants of which are perfectly holy, 24,—27. p. 362.

CHAP. XXII.

The description of the heavenly state is carried on under the figures of the water and tree of life, and of the throne of God and the Lamb, 1,—5. And, for a conclusion of the whole, the truth and certain accomplishment of all these prophetic visions are confirmed, by way of dialogue between the conducting angel, Christ himself, and the apostle *John*, who was forbidden to worship the angel, and ordered not to seal the prophecies of this book, which were soon to begin to be fulfilled in their order, and are so sacred as not to be added to, or diminished, upon pain of exclusion from all the blessings promised in them, which shall be conferred on the righteous, and denied to the wicked, when Christ shall come (as he said he quickly would) with a reward to every one, according to his works, 6,—16. To which the Spirit and the bride say, Come; and *John* adds his amen, and closes all with the usual apostolic benediction, 17,—21. p. 372.

A PRAC.

A PRACTICAL

EXPOSITION

OF THE

GENERAL EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE

JAMES,

IN THE FORM OF A

PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE GENERAL EPISTLE OF JAMES.

THIS Epiſtle is commonly ſuppoſed to have been wrote by that apoſtle *James*, who was the ſon of *Alpheus*, and ſtyled *James the leſs*, and *the brother of our Lord*. (See the notes on *Mat.* x. 3. and 1 *Cor.* xv. 7.) And it is called a *general* epiſtle, probably, becauſe it was wrote, not to any particular perſon, or church, but to *profeſſing Chriſtians* at large, though not excluſive of the *unbelievers* of the twelve tribes of *Iſrael*, whereſoever they were diſperſed through ſeveral countries, as appears from *chap.* v. 1,—6. and ſome other places: And therefore *the inſcription* is not to Chriſtians under any diſtinguiſhing character of them; but only to the *twelve tribes* in general; nor is the *ſalutation* in the uſual ſtrain of *grace and peace*, or the like, but only of *greeting*; nor is any *benediction* added at the cloſe.

The *divine authority* of this epiſtle is ſufficiently eſtabliſhed in Dr. *Whitby*'s preface to it. The *time* of its being wrote is thought to have been about the year of our Lord 60, when the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem* was approaching, in the year 72; and its chief *deſign* was to remonſtrate againſt the *corruption of manners*, which had ſpread among that people; many of which ſeemed to be greatly addicted to pride, contention, and worldly-mindedneſs, and had perverted the goſpel-doctrine of *juſtification alone by faith in Chriſt*, which ſome of them had turned into licentiouſneſs in practice, if not alſo in principle, directly contrary to its holy nature and deſign, and utterly inconſiſtent with a ſaving intereſt in its bleſſings; as alſo to remind them of the deſolation that was coming upon them, and to comfort the faithful among them under all the ſufferings which they at preſent did, or in a little time might, undergo from *Jewiſh* infidels for the ſake of Chriſt, but which would ſoon have an end.

The apoſtle, after the inſcription and ſalutation, encourages true believers to bear their trials with chearfulneſs and patience: to maintain good thoughts of God, and charge themſelves with all ſinful effects of their temptations; to keep a watch over their turbulent paſſions; and to receive the word of God with meekneſs, and put it into practice, *chap.* i. Cautions them againſt ſhewing a partial and undue reſpect to the rich, and treating the poor with contempt and neglect, under feigned expreſſions of pity toward them; takes occaſion from thence to illuſtrate that part of his deſign, which related to the inſignificancy of all profeſſions of faith in Chriſt for juſtification, without ſome proof of its ſincerity by fruitfulneſs in good works, which he confirms by the evidences that *Abraham* and *Rahab* gave of the truth and prevalent power of their faith in acts of holy obedience, *chap.* ii. Proceeds to guard them againſt reviling, cenſorious, and imperious language; ſhewing what miſchief is done by an unruly tongue, and how inconſiſtent an indulgence of it is with the Chriſtian temper and profeſſion, and with heavenly wiſdom, *chap.* iii. Reproves them for their litigious, proud, worldly, and envious ſpirit, which marred and defeated their prayers, and was contrary to God and his law; and for their diſregard to Providence, in purſuing their ſecular affairs, *chap.* iv. Denounces the judgments of God againſt thoſe of the unbelieving *Jews*, as ſoon to come upon them, who heaped up riches to themſelves by unrighteous gains. And then, turning again to the Chriſtian converts, he exhorts them to wait with patience for deliverance from the worſt of their enemies, who ſhould fall by approaching calamities, and for the better bleſſings of the world to come, without envying thoſe that were in more affluent circumſtances of this life, than themſelves; and eſpecially to avoid raſh and common ſwearing; to behave with a ſuitable Chriſtian ſpirit in proſperity and adverſity; to acknowledge their faults to, and offer ſuch prayers for, one another, as God will hear and anſwer; and to do what in them lay, for the converſion of thoſe that had lived in erroneous and ſinful courſes, contrary to the truth and holineſs of the goſpel, *chap.* v.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The apostle prefaces his epistle with a general salutation of the Jews *in their dispersion*, 1. *Addresses himself, first of all, to the Christian-converts among them, directing them how to make a due improvement of their troubles, how to apply to God under them, and how to behave in prosperous and adverse circumstances*, 2,—12. *Warns them, not to impute to God any temptations to sin; but to look upon all evil as proceeding from themselves, and all good from God*, 13,—18. *Infers the duties of watching against a rash and furious temper, and of receiving the word of God with meekness, and living according to it*, 19,—25. *And shews the difference between vain pretences, and real religion*, 26, 27.

TEXT.

JAMES a servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, to the twelve tribes which are scattered abroad, greeting,

2 My brethren, count it all joy when ye fall into divers temptations;

3 Knowing *this*, that the trying of your

PARAPHRASE.

JAMES, who is, and counts it a high honour to be, a ministring servant of the God of *Israel*, and of the Lord Jesus Christ, who is God, and the only Mediator between God and man, * sends this epistle, by divine authority, to all and every one of the twelve tribes of *Israel* (Acts xxvi. 7.) especially the professors of Christianity among them, into whose hands it may come, in what nation soever they be dispersed, whether by former captivities, or by later severities; and he heartily wishes them all manner of blessings, relating to this world, and that which is to come.

2 As to those of you, my dear brethren, who are so, not only after the flesh, but in a spiritual relation, and who, for your profession of faith in Christ, suffer many troubles of various kinds, which ye do not make to yourselves by your own guilt and folly, but are cast into by the unrighteous violence of wicked men, under the infinitely wise permission and sovereign disposals of the holy God, who graciously orders and over-rules them by his providence, and sanctifies them by his spirit, for the trial and improvement of your faith; (*ver.* 3. and 1 *Pet.* i. 7.) Be not ye discouraged at them; but rather esteem it your honour, and matter of the greatest spiritual rejoicing, that ye *are counted worthy to suffer shame*, and other hardships, *for his name;* (Acts v. 31.) and so to bear a noble testimony to him, for his glory, and the advantage of your own, as well as others souls.

3 As being fully persuaded in your own minds, upon the foot of divine revelation, and having an ex-

NOTE.

* *A Servant of God, and of the Lord Jesus Christ*, (Θεου και Κυριου Ιησου Χριστου δουλος) may be translated *a servant of God, even of the Lord Jesus Christ*, as no article follows (και) *and* in the *Greek*. (See the note on *Tit.* ii. 13.)

your faith worketh patience.

perience in yourſelves, that they are deſigned of God for the trying, proving, and rendering approved,* the truth and efficacy of your faith in Chriſt, and conſtancy in the profeſſion of it, as what will ſtand the teſt; and that every ſuch trial of your faith has a powerful influence, through the concurring operation of the Spirit, (1 *Pet.* iv. 14.) to produce and improve a calm ſubmiſſion, and perſevering reſignation to the ſovereign will, and holy providence of God in the moſt afflictive diſpenſations, which in a ſpecial manner miniſter occaſions, and call for, and inure the ſoul unto the exerciſe of patience, without murmuring at his hand in them, or being enraged againſt the inſtruments of them.

4 But let patience have *her* perfect work, that ye may be perfect and intire, wanting nothing.

4 But, as ever ye would reap this happy fruit of your trials, let patience take its own proper courſe, without check or diſturbance from your ſinful paſſions; and give full ſcope to its genuine exerciſes, as conſiſting of a meek and humble, compoſed, reſigned, and chearful frame of ſpirit; and *that* not only in the firſt onſets of one and another trouble, but with perſeverance, under every variety and continuance of them, all your days; to the end that (ἵνα) ye may be complete Chriſtians, (ſee the note on 1 *Cor.* ii. 6.) and arrive at the greateſt eminence in this, together with every other grace; and ſo may not be deficient in any thing that belongs to the Chriſtian ſtate and character, or that is neceſſary to your holding on, and holding out to the end, and finiſhing your courſe with joy, which ſhall iſſue in a perfect freedom from all ſin and ſorrow, and in the complete holineſs and happineſs of the heavenly ſtate.

5 If any of you lack wiſdom, let him aſk of God, that giveth to all *men* liberally and upbraideth not; and it ſhall be given him.

5 In order to the attaining of this, if any of you, amidſt all your ſtraits and difficulties, (λείπεται) is deſtitute of ſpiritual wiſdom, (as the beſt of us all, more or leſs, certainly are) to direct him in every caſe, and particularly how to judge of his afflictions, how to behave in a becoming manner under them, and how to make a ſuitable uſe and improvement of them, as may be moſt for the divine glory, and his own ſoul's advantage; let ſuch an one, under a humbling ſenſe of his own weakneſs and folly, and of the inſufficiency of

NOTE.

* The word (δοκιμιον) here rendered the *trying* of your faith, ſignifies *that by which* our faith is tried, and proved unto approbation, as pure and genuine, in alluſion to the trying of metals by a fire; and is a different word from that which is uſed in *Rom.* v. 4 where the apoſtle ſays, tribulation works patience, and patience *experience*, (δοκιμην) which ſignifies *the effect* of the trying; and ſo that, which tries our faith, works patience in its fruits and effects; and the patience, that is tried and proved, works the happieſt experience. (See the paraphraſe on *Rom.* v. 4.)

of any creature whatsoever, to conduct him in a right way, apply with earnest application and prayer, through Jesus Christ, to the God of all light and grace, for the leadings and guidance of his word, providence, and spirit, who is readier to give, than we are to ask, needful blessings of him; who bountifully distributes them with a free and open heart and hand to all sorts of men, and particularly to all that sincerely and in a right manner ask them of him; and who is so rich in mercy, and of so great kindness, as not to reproach humble supplicants, or twit them with their ignorance, folly, and unworthiness, or with the many favours which he has already bestowed upon them, and they have misimproved; nor will he disdain to hear and answer their petitions, how often soever they solicit him for still farther supplies; and he will graciously afford all seasonable counsel and assistances, that are needful for such a praying Christian. (See *Prov.* iii. 5, 6.)

6 But let him ask in faith, nothing wavering: for he that wavereth is like a wave of the sea, driven with the wind, and tossed.

6 But it is not his merely pouring out words, or uttering a prayer before the Lord, that will meet with his gracious answer; no, if he would succeed in his suit, it is to be presented, with a firm dependence on Christ, and on the wisdom, power, faithfulness, and goodness of God in him for a performance of his promises, without any staggering at them through unbelief: (*Rom.* iv. 20.) For he that gives way to distrusts, questionings, and sinful jealousies, whether God can, or will perform his gracious promises, is as unsteady and restless in principle and practice, as a wave of the sea, which sometimes swells upwards, and then sinks downwards, and is driven one way and another, backward and forwards, in a tumultuous manner by a stormy wind.

7 For let not that man think that he shall receive any thing of the Lord.

7 Let not therefore any man of such a diffident and fluctuating spirit, which dishonours, instead of giving glory to God, flatter himself as though his unstable and unbelieving prayer shall be answered, or that he shall receive the wisdom, or any good thing, which he asks of the Lord, in accomplishment of promises that belong only to true believers.

8 A double-minded man *is* unstable in all his ways.

8 A man of a *double heart*, (Ps. xii. 2.) that is divided between hope and despondency, or between God and corrupt affections to the world, inclining now one way, and then another, like those that halted between two opinions about *God* and *Baal;* (1 Kings xviii. 21.) or he, who would fain *serve* both God and Mammon, (*Matth.* vi. 24.) is unsettled in religion, and continually hesitating, fickle, and perplexed in all his thoughts, words, and actions about it;

it; and ſo brings nothing to paſs, nor can expect to ſpeed in his prayers.

9 Let the brother of low degree rejoice in that he is exalted:

9 But, to return to what has been ſaid about rejoicing in trials, (*ver.* 2.) Any brother that has a fixed faith in him, and in the power and grace of God through him, may warrantably plead and ſafely rely on every promiſe of his covenant. Upon this conſideration, let him that is poor in outward circumſtances, and oppreſſed by perſecutions, and is of a lowly ſpirit, ſuitable to ſuch an afflicted condition, glory (καυχασθω) in the thought, that he is highly advanced to all the ſpiritual riches of faith, as an heir of the kingdom of heaven, (*chap.* ii. 5.) and to the honour of thoſe believers, to whom *it is given on the behalf of Chriſt to ſuffer for his ſake*, and *upon whom the ſpirit of glory and of God reſteth.* (Phil. i. 29. and 1 Pet. iv. 14.)

10 But the rich, in that he is made low: becauſe as the flower of the graſs he ſhall paſs away.

10 And, on the other hand, as to any Chriſtian-brother, who, amidſt all his affluence, is brought to have low thoughts of himſelf, and of all his earthly enjoyments, as mean, precarious, and periſhing, and to be willing to give them all up for Chriſt; or who, having had abundance of the poſſeſſions of this life, is now reduced to poverty for the ſake of his holy profeſſion, and is of an humble ſpirit, let him rejoice in the happy exchange of temporal wealth and proſperity for the incomparably better and everlaſting riches of grace and glory: Becauſe, ſuppoſing that he were not to be deprived of his worldly enjoyments while he lives, he muſt ſoon die away from them; and then all his flouriſhing ſtate in them will periſh with him, like the fading flower of the field. (*Iſ.* xl. 6, 7.)

11 For the ſun is *no ſooner* riſen with a burning heat, *but* it withereth the graſs, and the flower thereof falleth, and the grace of the faſhion of it periſheth: ſo alſo ſhall the rich man fade away in his ways.

11 For as the ſun in the firmament no ſooner riſes in the full ſtrength of its ſcorching heat, like that which beat upon the head of *Jonah*, and was attended with *a vehement Eaſt wind*, (Jon. iv. 8.) but it immediately cauſes the flouriſhing graſs, or verdant ſtem to wither; and its beautiful flower ſickens, droops, and dies; and all the glory of its lively, gay, and florid appearance is deſtroyed: So the man of wealth and grandeur, that has no better portion than the ſplendid and pleaſing enjoyments of this preſent life, ſhall pine away in his iniquity, and be cut off, by one or another providence, in the midſt of all his ſchemes and deſigns for this world, and of all his proſperity and honour.

12 Bleſſed *is* the man that endureth temptation: for when he is tried he ſhall receive the crown of life, which

12 Happy, inexpreſſibly happy, is the man who is called, and has wiſdom and grace to enable him, in a Chriſtian manner, to bear the greateſt tribulation, even to the loſs of all things here for Chriſt: For when he has paſſed through the trial, and is

(δοκιμος)

which the Lord hath promiſed to them that love him.

(δοκιμος) approved of God, as having endured it with faith and patience, humble ſubmiſſion and holy fortitude, and ſtood the proof, he ſhall come off a conqueror; and, in oppoſition to the garland of fading herbs and flowers, which victors were crowned with in the *Grecian* games, ſhall receive the immortal and incorruptible crown of all heavenly life, bleſſedneſs, and glory; which the Lord Jeſus, the great Judge of all, and God the Father on his account, has freely promiſed, and will certainly give at the laſt day, to all thoſe, who, from a principle of faith in Chriſt, ſupremely deſire, eſteem, and delight in him, and look and long for his appearing in all his glory to their complete ſalvation. (*Heb.* ix. 28.) They therefore may well rejoice in all tribulations for his ſake.

13 Let no man ſay when he is tempted, I am tempted of God: for God cannot be tempted with evil, neither tempteth he any man.

13 If then any profeſſor of his name, inſtead of improving in grace and holineſs, ſhould fall into impatient murmurings, diſtruſt of God, and apoſtacy, or any other ſin, by means of the afflictions that befel him, and are ſuited, deſigned, and bleſſed, for the good of ſuch as make a proper uſe of them, let him not dare to think, or ſay, that when he is thus tried, and it becomes an occaſion of ſin to him, God, whoſe providence ordered thoſe trials, drew him into ſin by them. It is ſhocking impiety to bring any ſuch charge againſt him: For God is ſo infinitely pure and holy in his nature and will, deſigns and operations, that it is abſolutely impoſſible for him to be prevailed upon by any occurrence from without, or any motion within himſelf, to do the leaſt iniquity; nor can he, conſiſtent with his own abſolute perfection, entice or perſuade, much leſs inwardly influence, and much leſs ſtill ever neceſſitate, any one to commit the leaſt moral evil, * which he utterly abhors. (*Habak.* i. 13.)

14 But every man is tempted when he is drawn away of his own luſt, and enticed.

14 But the true and proper cauſe of any man's being induced by outward afflictions to revolt from God, or ſin againſt him, lies not in thoſe diſpenſations of providence, but in himſelf. Whenever they have ſuch a malignant effect upon him, it is owing to his own corrupt heart and wicked inclinations, which

NOTE.

* The *evil* here ſpoken of is undoubtedly *moral evil*, or the evil of *ſin*, as it is determinately explained in the two next verſes. But the evil of *affliction* or *puniſhment* is quite a different thing, with reſpect to which God ſays, *I make peace and create evil; and ſhall there be evil in the city, and the Lord has not done it?* (Iſa. xlv. 7. and *Amos* iii. 6.) And yet as he inflicts even this ſort of evil, only on account of ſin, which has deſerved it; we in the *moral view* may be ſaid to be the cauſe of it, rather than God, who *delights in mercy*, and counts judgments *his ſtrange work*; and ſaid of *Iſrael*, that they had *fallen by their iniquity*, and *deſtroyed themſelves.*

which violently drag him off (ἐξελκομενος) from the way of truth and holineſs, and from a profeſſion of Chriſt's name, and which (δελεαζομενος) beguile and delude him into ſin and apoſtacy, under ſome ſpecious deceitful appearances of carnal eaſe and pleaſure, or worldly advantage that he purpoſes to himſelf by it, as a fiſh is caught and drawn out of the water by the hook, that is covered with a tempting bait.

15 Then, when luſt hath conceived, it bringeth forth ſin: and ſin, when it is finiſhed bringeth forth death.

15 It is then, and then only, when the evil propenſion in the thoughts of a man's own heart, which is itſelf ſin in *embrio*, (Prov. xxiv. 9.) has gained the approbation and free conſent of the will, that it produces *actual* ſin, as the genuine fruit of its own depraved inclination; and actual ſin, when it is completed, allowed of, perſiſted in, and indulged with impenitence and unbelief, not only renders him obnoxious to, but will certainly iſſue in everlaſting miſery, as its proper fruit and wages, (*Rom.* v. 21. 23. ſee the note there) which is the ſecond death; and ſo his deſtruction is, and will be of himſelf.

16 Do not err, my beloved brethren.

16 Take heed then, my dear brethren, (μη πλαναϑε) leſt any of you run aſtray from the truth of the goſpel, and wander into ſuch abominably erroneous, blaſphemous, and injurious conceptions of the holy and bleſſed God, or of his ways, as to imagine that he is or can be the author of ſin, or doth any thing to encourage or promote it.

17 Every good gift, and every perfect gift, is from above, and cometh down from the Father of lights, with whom is no variableneſs, neither ſhadow of turning.

17 On the contrary, he is ſo infinitely far from this, that every good thing we enjoy, relating to this world and that which is to come; every bounty of Providence, and intellectual endowment, and every gift of a ſpiritual and holy kind, which has no mixture of ſin in it, but tends to the perfecting of our nature and happineſs; all, and nothing but, good in the natural, moral, and ſpiritual world, is originally and effectively from God, *whoſe throne is in the heavens, and whoſe kingdom rules over all;* (Pſal. ciii. 19.) and it deſcends from on high, and is communicated to us from him, who is himſelf *light, without any darkneſs at all;* (1 John i. 5.) and is the Fountain, Author, and Giver of all ſorts of light, rational and religious, as well as corporal, of all the light of knowledge, holineſs and happineſs, grace and glory; and who is unchangeably the ſame in himſelf and in his will and purpoſes, (*Mal.* iii. 6.) without the leaſt alteration, * or any mixture of ſhade,

NOTE.

* *With whom is no variableneſs,* (παρ' ω ουκ ενι παραλλαγη) ſeems to allude to the *parallaxes* or changes of the *ſun*, which appear different in the *Eaſt*, in its *meridian* height, and in the *Weſt*: And *neither ſhadow of turning* (η τροπης

shade, by turning from moral good to evil, in his own nature, or in any of his thoughts or dispensations: We may therefore be sure that no unrighteous evil, but all good comes from him.

18 Of his own will begat he us with the word of truth, that we should be a kind of first fruits of his creatures.

18 We, who believe, have a most eminent and endearing demonstration, that the best of all blessings derive from him; as it is not from any wisdom, or power, worthiness, or merit in us, but merely of his own good will, and sovereign pleasure, *according to his abundant mercy*, that he has regenerated and begotten us to a lively hope of an everlasting inheritance, (*John* i. 13. 1 *Pet.* i. 3, 4.) by means of the gospel, which is his true and faithful word, and is rendered efficacious, in the hand of the Spirit, for producing the new birth, and all the holiness and happiness that ensue upon it. (See *John* xvii. 17. 1 *Cor.* iv. 15. and 1 *Pet.* i. 23.) And he has done this for us, that we, like the first fruits under the law, might be consecrated to him, as his peculiar property, and the most excellent kind of all his creatures; and as the pledge and earnest of his gathering in a harvest of souls to himself, from among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, by a new creation of them in *Christ Jesus unto good works*, (Eph. ii. 10.) in which he first began with us, the converted *Jews*.

19 Wherefore, my beloved brethren, let every man be swift to hear, slow to speak, slow to wrath.

19 Therefore, my dear Christian brethren, let every one of you, suitable to his character and obligations, as a new creature, be ready to hear, and attend to what God says in his word, about himself, and about the great and good things, that he has done, and promised to do for his people: Let not such an one dare to speak reproachfully of God, or of his ways of providence and grace; nor be rash and hasty in setting up for a preacher, or in giving his sense of difficult texts of Scripture before he has well considered them; and, as ever he would not speak unadvisedly with his lips, let him keep a curb upon his

NOTE.

(*η τροπης αποσκιασμα*) seems to allude to departures of the sun from us between the *tropics*, that cast different shades. But there is no variation in the nature or will of God, who is always the same, and whose dispensations, how various soever, are all *according to the counsel of his own will.* (Eph. i. 11.) And there is no inconsistency in *this* with those passages, that speak of his *repenting* of any good, or evil, which he by his word, or providence, or both, seemed to have intended to perform: For they relate, not to any alteration in the mind or decree of God himself, but only in his external methods of procedure, when they are such as men use to make upon any change in their own purposes: But as God infallibly foreknew all events from eternity, he always invariably determined to alter his various dispensations, as he knew the circumstances of things would make it fit for him so to do. To suppose the contrary would argue a most unsufferable self-subversive imperfection in the Almighty, infinitely wise and blessed God, and in the certainty and steadiness of his views and designs, as the great Governor of the world.

his paſſions, and take heed of an angry wrathful temper in diſputing for, or againſt points of controverſy; or in treating any perſon with haughty contempt and ſeverity, that differs from him. *

20 For the wrath of man worketh not the righteouſneſs of God.

20 For the unguarded heat and intemperate fury of a man's own paſſions, which, whatever be pretended, proceed from pride, ſelfiſhneſs, and impatience of contradiction, and not from a regular and ſacred zeal, are far from ſerving God's righteous cauſe, which needs no ſuch unhallowed methods to ſupport it; and are far from recommending to others his way of righteouſneſs by Jeſus Chriſt, as revealed in the goſpel; (*Rom.* i. 17.) or the practice of righteouſneſs, which God enjoins and approves: (1 *Cor.* xv. 34. and *Pſal.* xi. 7.) They, on the contrary, cloud and hurry a man's own thoughts, and render him incapable of ſpeaking aright for God; and at the ſame time prejudice the minds of others againſt all that he offers to bring them over unto righteouſneſs.

21 Wherefore lay apart all filthineſs, and ſuperfluity of naughtineſs, and receive with meekneſs the ingrafted word, which is able to ſave your ſouls.

21 Labour therefore to caſt away, with abhorrence, all thoſe corrupt affections, which defile the ſoul, ſaying to them, *Get ye hence*, (Iſa. xxx. 22.) and all the overflowings of malice, (περισσειαν κακιας) which are exceſſively evil, and are like the luxuriant branches of a tree, which ſuck away the ſap that ſhould make it fruitful; and, having abandoned theſe, let it be your great concern, that, with all humility, modeſty, and ſubmiſſion of your underſtandings and hearts, conſciences and affections to the authority of God in his word, ye may cordially embrace it with faith and love, and it may be ſet, like a good and fruitful graft, into your very ſouls, as vitally united with them, and turning all their diſpoſitions and productions into its own holy likeneſs, which is completely ſufficient to ſhew you the way of ſalvation; and when received into the heart by faith, and attended with the power of the Spirit, is wonderfully efficacious to nouriſh your immortal ſouls with ſaving virtue, and bring them into a poſſeſſion of all heavenly happineſs, which conſiſts in a deliverance from ſin and miſery, and in an enjoyment of, and conformity to, the bleſſed God in all his glory for ever.

22 But

NOTE.

* The *three directions* contained in this verſe may very well be conſidered as *general rules* of conduct in the ordinary courſe of our lives and converſation, that we ſhould be more ſwift to hear than to ſpeak, and ſhould keep a guard upon our paſſions. But as this verſe is an *inference* from the foregoing diſcourſe; and as the good and bad uſe of the tongue, and regulation of the paſſions, are handled diſtinctly and at large in *chap.* iii. I rather think that the apoſtle intended all theſe exhortations in ſome ſuch peculiar reference to what he had juſt before been ſpeaking of, as is ſuggeſted in the paraphraſe. (Vid. *Zanch.* in loc.)

22. But be ye doers of the word, and not hearers only, deceiving your own selves.

22 But that it may have this happy effect upon you, see that its influence be so powerful in your hearts, as to engage you to put its excellent and holy principles into practice in your lives; and that ye content not yourselves with barely giving it the hearing, and assenting to it, to fill your heads with notions of the gospel, as if this were all that is necessary to salvation; which would be to delude your own souls by fallacious reasonings, (παραλογιζομενοι ἑαυτους) and putting the worst of all cheats upon yourselves, in matters of the highest and everlasting consequence.

23 For if any be a hearer of the word, and not a doer, he is like unto a man beholding his natural face in a glass:

23 For, let people's pretences be what they will, if any one be only a hearer of the word of God, and do not receive it with faith and love, so as to regulate his dealings with God, and conversation in the world, according to it, he is like *a man*, (ανδρι) who, being ordinarily less curious than women about cleanliness and dress, cursorily looks at the image of his own human face in a mirror or looking-glass; and when he goes away thinks no more of it, nor takes any care to wipe off the spots or dirt upon it. Just so it is with the careless and unprofitable hearer: When he comes to attend on the preaching of the word of God, which may fitly be compared to a looking-glass, as it plainly discovers what a man is in himself, according to the law, and what he may hope to be in Christ according to the gospel, (2 *Cor.* iii. 18.) he has some notions and convictions of his own guilt, depravity, and danger, and of his need of a Saviour, and of a thorough change in heart and life; but proceeds no further:

24 For he beholdeth himself, and goeth his way, and straightway forgetteth what manner of man he was.

24 For, having taken only a slight and transient view of himself, without any deep and abiding impressions upon his heart, he goes away, like the man who beheld his natural face in a glass; and through the cares, or riches, or pleasures, of this life, (*Luke* viii. 14.) immediately lays aside all thoughts or concern about what he saw of his own sin and misery, and want of pardoning and renewing grace, while he sat under the word; and so goes on in impenitence and unbelief, and in a sinful course of life, just as before.

25 But whoso looketh into the perfect law of liberty, and continueth

25 But (ο δε παρακυψας) he who, in opposition to a slight and transient view, (*ver.* 23, 24.) accurately and intently looks into the glass of the gospel-revelation,* which is a complete doctrine or spiritual

NOTE.

* By *the perfect law of liberty* seems to be meant *the doctrine of the gospel*, which was spoken of in the preceding context, and in a lax sense of the word is here styled *a law*, as in *Rom.* iii 27. (See the note there.) For the *Mosaic* law, in every view of it, is always represented in the New Testament, as *a law of servitude*, in opposition to the gospel; and never as a *law of liberty*. (Vid. *Par.* in loc.)

nuſh *therein*, he being not a forgetful hearer, but a doer of the work, this man ſhall be bleſſed in his deed.

liberty to true believers, for their deliverance from the ceremonial yoke of bondage, and the ſervile ſpirit of the *Moſaic* diſpenſation, and from the guilt and power of ſin, the curſe of the law, the wrath of God, and eternal miſery, and for their ſerving him with holy freedom and delight; and he who continues in the faith and practice of the things contained therein, and ſo is not careleſs and unmindful of what he heard, or of what he ſaw himſelf to be in that glaſs, but lives in the exerciſe of every grace, and in the diſcharge of every duty anſwerable to it; this man is happy indeed, though not for, yet in his work of faith and labour of love, and in the very keeping of God's commands; (*Pſ.* xix. 11.) and as his *fruit is unto holineſs, the end ſhall be everlaſting life.* (Rom. vi. 22.)

26 If any man among you ſeem to be religious, and bridleth not his tongue, but deceiveth his own heart, this man's religion *is* vain.

26 Upon the whole then, if any one among you pretends to be a worſhipper of God, (θρησκος εἶναι) or makes a great ſhow of religion, and talks abundantly of it, that he may paſs for a pious man; and yet, at the ſame time, do not reſtrain and govern his tongue, as a furious headſtrong horſe is checked and curbed by the bridle; but gives himſelf leave to uſe profane and abuſive language, or to rail againſt, revile, cenſure, and reproach his brother, flattering himſelf with a vain conceit, as though a zeal for God would juſtify all the injurious and bitter words, which in reality proceed from the pride and paſſion of his own deceived heart; all this man's religion, whatever he or others may think of it, is an empty inſignificant thing, (*ver.* 20.) which will never do him any good, as one that is bleſſed in his deed. (*ver.* 25.)

27 Pure religion and undefiled, before God and the Father, is this, To viſit the fatherleſs and widows in their affliction, *and* to keep himſelf unſpotted from the world.

27 In oppoſition to all theſe falſe and hypocritical appearances, the religion of the goſpel, that is truly ſincere and uncorrupted, without mixture of human inventions, or of carnal principles, motives, and ends to defile it, and is exerciſed, as in the ſight and preſence of God, even the Father, according to his will and word, with a deſire of pleaſing him, rather than men; the religion that is approved and accepted of God in Chriſt, is *this*, it diſpoſes and engages the Chriſtian to be tender, kind, and compaſſionate to the needy and diſtreſſed, eſpecially of the houſhold of faith, (*Gal.* vi. 10.) in doing what he can for their relief and comfort, with all the condeſcenſion and friendſhip that are manifeſted in readily viſiting and aſſiſting poor fatherleſs children, and deſtitute widows, who, of all others, need a helping hand; and by its powerful influence upon him, he is enabled to behave in ſuch a circumſpect and holy manner, as to keep clear of the pollutions of this evil and enſnaring world, that he may not defile himſelf, or bring a ſlur upon his

his conscience, hopes, or character, by *the lust of the flesh, the lust of the eyes, or the pride of life.* (1 John ii. 16.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

Blessed be God! who takes care of his scattered ones, wheresoever they are. Though their tribulations for his name's sake may be great; yet they may rejoice in them, as over-ruled and sanctified for the trial and improvement of their faith and patience, and the perfecting of his good work in them, who shall receive the crown of life, which he has promised to those that love him. What is all this world, which fades and perishes like the flower of the field by the scorching heat of the sun, compared with the exalted and immortal blessings that belong to the humble Christian of the lowest degree? But, O what spiritual wisdom do the children of God need to enable them to behave, as becomes them under their various trials! And what solid grounds have they to ask it in faith! The Father of Lights will give it to them; and not upbraid, but liberally supply persons of all characters and conditions with such good things as they pray for in faith; while others defeat their own prayers, by distrusting his power, faithfulness, and grace, and by fluctuating in religion like a wave of the sea. But if any are drawn into sin and apostacy, by means of the temptations they meet with, how monstrously impious and shocking is it to father their sin upon God, as though he were the cause of it! All good and no moral evil comes from him, who dwells on high; and who, in the mere sovereign pleasure of his own gracious will, forms his people for himself by his regenerating spirit, and the instrumentality of his word, that they may be an excellent kind of creatures to shew forth his praise; and such is the absolute unchangeableness of his holy nature and will, that he can neither be induced to do any iniquity himself, nor to abet or encourage it in others. But whosoever commits sin, it is all owing to the corrupt inclinations of his own heart, which, having once gained the free consent of the will, produces actual sin; and this, perfected in, brings forth its proper wages, in death and ruin; and so he destroys himself.—How watchful should we be against pride and passion, hard thoughts of God, and an assuming temper, that is more ready to speak, than to hear! And with what humility, reverence, and submission to the authority of God in his word, should we receive it, that, by the concurrence of his spirit, it may become an engrafted word to the saving of our souls; and that we may not only be hearers, but hearty believers, and conscientious observers and doers of all that it says to us! Without practical godliness, all a man's thoughts about his own state and condition, that have at any time been pretented to his view, in the glass of God's word, are soon forgotten, and leave him just where they found him, impenitent, unbelieving, and unreformed. But he who has a clear and transforming insight, by divine illumination, into the gospel, which is a perfect system of the noblest liberty to true believers, is such a hearer of the word, as is blessed in his way and work, and shall be so at the end of them. O how seriously concerned should we be, not to deceive our own souls in an affair of such vast and eternal consequence! If we are under the dominion of a severely censorious and unruly spirit and tongue, whatever our pretences to religion be, we may depend upon it, that they are all hypocritical, empty, and vain. But if we have that faith, which works by love and compassion to the poor, the destitute widow and fatherless, and which purifies the heart, and fortifies us against the temptations of the world; this is sincere and uncorrupted religion in God's account, and he will own it.

CHAP.

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle goes on to ſhew that all notions and profeſſions of faith are vain, if not productive of impartial love and juſtice to others, the poor as well as the rich, 1,—13. *And ſtrongly argues from the nature of things, (illuſtrated by fruitleſs pretences of pity to the poor, and by a body without a ſoul) and from the inſtances of* Abraham *and* Rahab, *the neceſſity of good works to prove the ſincerity of faith, which otherwiſe is dead, and will be of no more advantage than the faith of devils,* 14,—26.

TEXT.

MY brethren, have not the faith of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, *the Lord* of glory, with reſpect of perſons.

PARAPHRASE.

THAT your religion, my profeſſing Chriſtian brethren, may prove to be of that kind, which is *pure and undefiled*, (chap. i. 27.) take heed of entertaining mere notions of faith in our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who is in himſelf a glorioufly divine perſon, and the purchaſer and giver of heavenly glory; and is to be embraced as glorified, after his ſufferings and death, by a lively faith in him; and beware of taking up with ſuch empty profeſſions of his glorious name, and preſumptuous dependencies on him for eternal life, as leave you under the power of a partial, unjuſt, and carnal acceptation of perſons, (προσωπολημψιας) * not according to their religious characters, and the merits of their cauſe, but according to their higher or lower circumſtances in this life.

2 For if there come unto your aſſembly a man with a gold ring, in goodly apparel, and there come in alſo a poor man, in vile raiment;

2 For if, at any time, there come into your ſynagogue, or place of aſſembling, as for religious worſhip, ſo for judging and determining eccleſiaſtical and civil cauſes, (ſee the note on *ver.* 1.) one man that makes a figure, and is decked with rich and ſplendid ornaments, ſuch as a gold ring on his finger, and ſumptuous raiment; and another comes into the ſame aſſembly

NOTE.

* *With reſpect of perſons* is not to be underſtood as deſigned to diſcountenance paying *civil reſpect*, in a decent manner, to perſons of ſuperior rank and ſtation, which would be to contradict the apoſtle *Paul*'s order, (*Rom.* xiii. 7.) to *render honour to whom honour is due*, by virtue of their civil character: But it rather relates to partial reſpects being ſhewn in *civil and eccleſiaſtical proceedings*, merely on account of one perſon's being richer and finer dreſſed than another; for in the next verſe the apoſtle ſpeaks of one and the other's coming into the *aſſembly* or *ſynagogue* (εις την συναγωγην) which was uſed for civil and eccleſiaſtical judicature, as well as for religious worſhip; and then he goes on (*ver.* 3,—9.) to ſpeak of *ſitting at the footſtool*, in alluſion to the cuſtom of placing perſons of lower rank there in their judicatories; and ſpeaks of *judges* and *judgment-ſeats*, and of perſons acting partially, as *tranſgreſſors of the law*, which ſeems to refer to the law *about impartial judgment*, without reſpect to the rich or poor, *Lev.* xix. 15. and *Deut.* i. 17. (See Dr. *Hammond*'s and *Whitby*'s notes here.) And ſo this is no way inconſiſtent with that becoming deference to perſons of ſuperior rank and character, which our bleſſed Lord recommends in common converſation and behaviour, *Luke* xiv. 8,—10.

assembly or court, that is in mean circumstances, and makes a despicable appearance in a coarse or ragged dress;

3 And ye have respect to him that weareth the gay clothing, and say unto him, Sit thou here in a good place; and say to the poor, Stand thou there, or sit here under my footstool:

3 And if, in this case, ye shew abundance of respect and deference to him that glitters in fine and gaudy cloaths; and, for that reason only, take great care to ingratiate yourselves with him, and to decide every thing in his favour, and in token thereof invite him to the most honourable seat, saying, Pray, sir, please to take your place here; and at the same time treat the man of low circumstances with scorn, and with a contempt of him and his cause, saying, Stand you at a distance; or, if you would sit, it must be at no better place than my footstool:

4 Are ye not then partial in yourselves, and are become judges of evil thoughts?

4 Is not this scandalous difference, which ye make between the rich and the poor, a plain evidence of an unjustifiable partiality in your temper and conduct towards one rather than the other? And do ye not, in reality, pass such a judgment about them severally, as proceeds from carnal, wrong, and biassed ways of thinking concerning them, only according to outward appearance?

5 Hearken, my beloved brethren, hath not God chosen the poor of this world, rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which he hath promised to them that love him?

5 To guard you against, and cure you of this evil, pray, my dear brethren, whom I trust God loves, consider how contrary this opinion and proceeding of yours is to his thoughts and ways in things that relate to religion and salvation; has not the great and blessed God, in the exceeding riches of his grace, from all eternity chosen (*Eph.* i. 4.) mostly persons of lower circumstances among mankind to faith and holiness here, and to complete salvation hereafter? (2 *Thess.* ii. 13.) And has he not shewn, in the dispensations of his sovereign mercy, that he has peculiarly made choice of such to be partakers of much more excellent riches, through faith in his Son, and through lively exercises of it, than can be found in this world; and to be intitled to, and brought to the possession of an inheritance of all the blessings of that kingdom of grace here, and of glory hereafter, which he has made over, in the promises of the new covenant, to those that desire, esteem, and delight in him above all creature-enjoyments?

6 But ye have despised the poor. Do not rich men oppress you, and draw you before the judgment-seats?

6 But while ye, on the contrary, have treated your poor Christian brethren with neglect and disregard, ye have dishonoured and poured contempt upon those whom God loves, and has put the highest honour upon, and paid your chief respects to such as he despises, and as ye have no cause to caress. For what sort of treatment do ye meet with from them? Is it not the custom of the great and rich men of this world to deal very injuriously by you? Do not the

generality

generality of them, through pride and inſolence, and enmity to Chriſt and his ways, ſet themſelves againſt you, and (καταδυναστευκσιν υμων) exerciſe a cruel tyranny over you for his ſake; and drag you into courts of judicature to ſit in judgment upon you, and to condemn, fine, and impriſon you, and put ſome of your fellow Chriſtians to death, on account of their profeſſion of the goſpel?

7 Do not they blaſpheme that worthy name, by the which ye are called?

7 Do they not belch out the moſt horrid reproaches and blaſphemies upon that glorious name, on which ye call, and by which ye are denominated Chriſtians, and diſtinguiſhed as related to Chriſt? Is it not thus with the great men among both *Jews* and *Gentiles*?

8 If ye fulfil the royal law, according to the ſcripture, Thou ſhalt love thy neighbour as thyſelf, ye do well:

8 If, inſtead of paying extravagant honours to men of rank and condition in the world, becauſe of their riches, and deſpiſing the poor, becauſe of their poverty, ye were impartially to attend to, and fulfil all the duties of the great law of love; which may be called *the royal law*, as it is a moſt excellent law, formerly enacted by the king of *Iſrael* under the Old Teſtament-diſpenſation; (*Lev* xix. 18.) and as Chriſt, the King of the New Teſtament-church, has eſtabliſhed, recommended and enforced it upon all his diſciples by new and evangelical motives; (*Matth.* xxii. 39. and *John* xiii. 34, 35.) the purport of which is, You ſhall treat all your fellow-creatures, and eſpecially your religious brethren, with as much benevolence, juſtice, and mercy, according to their various circumſtances, as you would think right and reaſonable, and would expect in like caſes to be treated yourſelf. If, I ſay, ye thus behave towards all ranks and degrees of mankind, and particularly of your brethren in the Lord, from a principle of love, and in obedience to the command of Chriſt, your Lord and King, ye act an honourable part (καλως) becoming your Chriſtian character.

9 But if ye have reſpect to perſons, ye commit ſin, and are convinced of the law as tranſgreſſors.

9 But if, on the other hand, ye make partial diſtinctions in ſhewing favourable regards to the rich, rather than the poor, merely on account of their different worldly circumſtances, ye therein work iniquity; (αμαρτιαν εργαζεσθε) and are convicted, reproved, and condemned, as tranſgreſſors of that comprehenſive and moſt excellent law of love, (*ver.* 8.) which includes the particular law, that expreſsly ſays, *Ye ſhall do no unrighteouſneſs in judgment; thou ſhalt not reſpect the perſon of the poor, nor honour the perſon of the mighty: But in righteouſneſs ſhalt thou judge thy neighbour.* (Lev. xix. 15.)

10 For whoſoever ſhall keep the whole law, and yet

10 For admitting, for arguments ſake, that any one were exactly to keep all the reſt of the precepts of God's law, the ſum of which is love; yet if he violates

yet offend in one *point*, he is guilty of all.

violates it only in one single instance, he, by just construction, is guilty of a breach, though not *of the whole of* the law, yet *of the whole law*, and by its sentence is condemned as such; (*Gal.* iii. 10.) because he as really sins against *the authority* of the law-giver by one act of disobedience to any of its precepts, as if he had broke them all; and so God is *as truly*, though not *as much*, offended by one transgression, as a man is hurt by the injury, that is done to only one member of his body; and the whole system of the law is broke thereby, as a chain is by breaking only one of its links.

11 For he that said, Do not commit adultery; said also, Do not kill. Now if thou commit no adultery, yet if thou kill, thou art become a transgressor of the law.

11 For the same God, who has said in the moral law, *Thou shalt not commit adultery*, has also said, *Thou shalt not* unjustly *kill*, or murder any one whatsoever; both which are contrary to his *law of love*. Now, if you are not guilty of adultery, or of any uncleanness, in thought, word, or deed; yet if you are guilty of murder in actually committing it, or even in doing, or designing, or desiring to do, what has a tendency to any unlawful way of destroying the life of a fellow-creature, you break in upon the whole of that divine authority, which enacted the law that equally forbids both: And the same holds true with respect to all its other precepts.

12 So speak ye, and so do, as they that shall be judged by the law of liberty.

12 Let therefore the whole of your behaviour in disposition, word and deed toward fellow-creatures, as well as toward God, be such as is becoming and right for those to be found in the practice of, that live under the gospel-dispensation, and that judge of their brethren, and shall be dealt with in the great day, by, and according to the tenor of the gospel, which is a *doctrine according to godliness*, (1 Tim. vi. 3.) and both obliges to, and, upon principles of faith and love, sets a man's soul at liberty for an impartial and universal obedience to all God's commands, with a noble freedom and delight, far surpassing all that could be obtained by the *Mosaic* dispensation, from which it has also set him free. (See the note on *chap.* i. 25.)

13 For he shall have judgment without mercy, that hath shewed no mercy; and mercy rejoiceth against judgment.

13 For he, whose faith doth not work by love, according to the grace and obligation of the gospel, so as to shew compassion to his poor brethren, shall pass under a severe sentence of condemnation and wrath, to be executed upon him in the day of judgment, without any mixture of that mercy, which is held forth in the doctrine of Christ: And, on the contrary, he who, as the fruit of his faith, exercises tenderness and loving kindness toward them, shall rejoice in his deliverance from condemnation and

wrath, and againſt fears of being caſt in judgment *; and divine mercy, according to the goſpel, ſhall triumph in his favour, and glory over ſtrict juſtice according to the law, in the final day of account, agreeable to our Lord's own repreſentation of it. (*Mat.* xxv. 34,—46.)

14 What *doth it* profit, my brethren, though a man ſay he hath faith, and have not works? Can faith ſave him?

14 Of what advantage then, my brethren, can it be to any man, if, at the ſame time, that he talks and boaſts of his believing in Chriſt, and expecting ſalvation by him, he has no good works ſpringing from his faith, to prove the ſincerity of it? Can ſuch a ſort of notional faith, and his profeſſion of it, that has no prevailing influence upon him to holineſs and obedience, be effectual unto his ſalvation? No certainly; It is not, in reality, what it pretends to be, as may be illuſtrated in the following manner.

15 If a brother or ſiſter be naked, and be deſtitute of daily food;

15 Suppoſe any Chriſtian brother or ſiſter were all in rags, and had not cloaths ſufficient to cover their nakedneſs, and keep them warm; and at the ſame time were ready to periſh with hunger, through want of neceſſary food for the preſent day's ſubſiſtence. (της εφημερης τροφης.)

16 And one of you ſay unto them, Depart in peace, be you warmed and filled; notwithſtanding ye give them not thoſe things which are needful to the body; what *doth it* profit?

16 And if, in ſuch deplorable circumſtances, any of you were to ſay to them, with an air of pity and concern, Poor diſtreſſed creature! Your caſe is very miſerable indeed; I wiſh you well, and ſhould be glad to hear of ſome good providence's appearing for your relief; go your way with a ſatisfied mind, in hope that God will provide neceſſary raiment to cover you, and food convenient for you: But, though it be in the power of your hands, ye nevertheleſs give them no manner of aſſiſtance that is neceſſary for them; What ſignify all theſe fine words and profeſſions of good wiſhes? They are all mockery, inſtead of cordial affection; and can be of no avail either to them, or to your own ſouls.

17 Even ſo faith, if it hath not works, is dead, being alone.

17 Juſt ſo the caſe ſtands with reſpect to *faith*, in God's account, whoſe judgment is according to truth, if it do not produce ſpiritual and holy fruits of righteouſneſs to his glory, and the good of others, it is a mere lifeleſs notion, that has nothing vital or operative in it, as being entirely deſtitute of every genuine effect, and proper evidence of its ſincerity; and it can never be profitable to eternal life, how highly ſoever any may boaſt of it, and rely upon it.

18 Yea, a man may

18 Yea, a true believer may fairly expoſtulate with, and

NOTE.

* *Mercy* may here ſignify *the merciful*, the abſtract being put for the concrete, as the *circumciſion* ſometimes is for the *circumciſed*; or elſe it may relate to the *mercy of God*, which ſhall be extended to the merciful man, inſtead of his being dealt with, in a way of juſtice, according to his deſerts.

may say, thou hast faith, and I have works: shew me thy faith without thy works, and I will shew thee my faith by my works.

and confound such a vaunting hypocrite, by arguing with him in the following manner: You talk mightily of your faith without giving any proof of its sincerity; and I, on the contrary, instead of taking up with high swelling words and professions of faith, have evangelical works of love and obedience to bear witness that my faith has its proper influence upon me. Now, if your faith is of the right sort, shew it to be so by your practice answerable to it, which I challenge you to do; and I, in like manner, will give the same proof of mine, even beyond all that you can produce of that kind *. Or else demonstrate to me, that your faith is good and effectual, if you can, (which is indeed impossible) without any suitable works to support your confident boastings of it: And I will take a better course for making it plain to you, that my faith is vital and efficacious, by its producing works of holiness in my life; and so, in a just and scriptural way of reasoning, I will substantially prove the cause by its effects, as the nature of a tree is known by its fruits. (*Matth.* vii. 16,—20.)

19 Thou believest that there is one God; thou doest well. The devils also believe and tremble.

19 If you insist that you have true faith in a fundamental doctrine of all real religion, because you believe that there is a God, in opposition to atheists; and that there is but one living and true God, in opposition to heathen idolaters; thus far it must be owned that you are in the right, and bear an honourable testimony to the Deity. (καλως ποιεις) But if you rest in a bare assent to this important point, it will be of no avail to your salvation: For the very demons themselves, those wicked spirits that are consigned over to everlasting destruction, believe this as well as you; not one of them all can deny it; and they tremble at the thought of his power and justice, which, perhaps, is more than you do: But if you have no better faith than this, you have reason to be afraid, and must one day tremble before his terrible Majesty, as much as they.

20 But wilt thou know, O vain man, that

20 But, O foolish empty professor of religion, (κενε) you who take up with such a bare persuasion, as has no practical influence upon your life and conversation,

NOTE.

* The paraphrase on this verse takes in both the *marginal* and *textual* reading in our translation. According to the *marginal* reading *by thy works*, which is supported by several good copies. (Vid. *Mill.* in loc.) it may be considered as the true believer's challenge of the boasting professor to produce that evidence, which hitherto had not appeared; and engaging to join issues with him on that foot. But according to the *textual* reading *without thy works*, which seems most agreeable to the nature of the argument, it may be understood as a suggestion of the impossibility of proving the truth of faith without good works, as its fruits; and of the advantage that we has, in point of evidence, who can demonstrate the cause by its effects.

that faith without works is dead?

and yet flatter yourſelf that all is ſafe and well, Will you not conſider, nor lay to heart, that, whatever your pretences and profeſſions be, a mere doctrinal faith, without ſome correſpondent works, as its product, to prove that it is of the right kind, is, as has been obſerved, (*ver.* 17.) a dead worthleſs name and form, which has no life or activity in it; nor can be effectual to any ſaving advantage? Let me illuſtrate this in an example or two.

21 Was not *Abraham* our father juſtified by works, when he had offered Iſaac his ſon upon the altar?

21 Was not *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, from whom we *Jews* are deſcended, and in whom the carnal *Iſraelites* amongſt us boaſt, as though their relation to him would ſecure their happineſs? Was not he himſelf proved to be a ſincere believer, * and ſo

NOTE.

*. It is evident to me, that *Abraham*'s being *juſtified by works* could not relate to the juſtification of *his perſon* before God; becauſe in that ſenſe he was juſtified long before upon his firſt believing, even before he was circumciſed, *Rom.* iv. 10. 11.; nor could it relate to what ſome call the *ſecondary* juſtification; for this, according to them, depended upon his *finally* perſevering in good works, whereas the works here ſpecified were performed ſeveral years before his death: Nor can the other inſtance of *Rahab*'s being juſtified by works (*ver.* 25.) relate to her own *perſonal juſtification*, with regard to her *ſpiritual ſtate*: For there is not the leaſt appearance, that this faith of her's was for *juſtification to eternal life*; or that it had any reference to *Chriſt*, or to the *types*, *prophecies*, or *promiſes* of him, who was *the object* to be believed in for a ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation: and her works were only the fruit of that faith which ſhe had relating to *temporal* ſalvation, and ſo proved that ſhe really did believe that *the Lord had given* Iſrael *the land* in which ſhe dwelt, and that *he is God in heaven above and in earth below*; and this faith operated ſo ſtrongly in her, as to put her upon making terms for her own and family's ſafety, from the deſtruction that was coming upon *Jericho*. (See *Joſh.* ii. 8,—13.) And the author to the *Hebrews* takes no notice of her *juſtification*, but only ſays, with a reference to the deſtruction of that city, *By faith the harlot* Rahab *periſhed not with them that believed not, when ſhe had received the ſpies with peace.* (Heb. xi. 31. ſee the note there.) But there was nothing of *juſtifying faith* in all this; no, nor in that other inſtance, which our apoſtle alledged (*ver.* 19.) of him that *believes there is one God*, which *the devils alſo believe and tremble.* Theſe obſervations ſeem to lead us to an eaſier ſolution, than I have met with, of the difficulties that have been raiſed about reconciling this and the following verſes, which ſpeak of a *man's being juſtified by works, and not by faith only*, with the apoſtle *Paul*'s doctrine of *juſtification alone by faith without works*, which he ſo much inſiſted on, *Rom.* iii. 28. and iv. 1,—6. and *Gal.* ii. 16. and in ſeveral other places: For it appears by the inſtances which the apoſtle *James* here argues upon, that, except in the caſe of *Abraham*, it is not, ſo much at leaſt, about juſtification by Chriſt, through faith in him, as about the juſtification of *the truth and ſincerity* of faith in God and in his promiſes; which he ſhews to be dead, and altogether unprofitable, unleſs it be proved to be genuine by its practical influence upon the heart and life to all holy obedience; and ſo he ſpeaks of juſtifying a man's *faith*, or his *character*, as a ſincere believer, to free him from the charge of *hypocriſy*; and not of the juſtification of *his perſon*, to acquit him from a charge of guilt, and from law-condemnation, as to *his ſtate* before God, which the apoſtle *Paul* ſo often affirms to be *by faith without works.* There is therefore no real contradiction between theſe two apoſtles; ſince it is a quite different ſort of *faith*, and of *juſtification*, which they reſpectively ſpeak of, and *that* with a view to different ſorts of *perſons*. The apoſtle *James*, to confute licentious *ſolifidians*, ſhews that all notions and profeſſions, even of faith in God, without good works to juſtify its *ſincerity*, are vain; and the apoſtle

ſo his faith juſtified, or demonſtrated to be effectual, by his eminent works of obedience, when, at God's command, he fully determined, and actually attempted, as far as God permitted him, to offer up *Iſaac*, his beloved and only ſon of the promiſe, upon the altar which he had prepared for that purpoſe? (*Gen.* xxii. 1,—12.)

22 Seeſt thou how faith wrought with his works, and by works was faith made perfect?

22 Do not you hereby plainly ſee, how effectually his faith operated in producing theſe remarkably eminent works of unreſerved ſubjection and obedience to God; and how, by performing thoſe works, his faith was manifeſted to be completely true and right faith, that had no defect in any thing eſſentially belonging to it?

23 And the ſcripture was fulfilled, which ſaith, Abraham believed God, and it was imputed unto him for righteouſneſs: and he was called the friend of God.

23 And as this was an undeniable proof of the reality and power of his faith, that paſſage of Scripture was hereby evidently ſhewn to be fulfilled, (ſee the note on *ver.* 21.) which ſpake of him long before, ſaying, (*Gen.* xv. 6.) Abraham *believed in the Lord; and he counted it to him for righteouſneſs*, that is, He believed in the promiſe of God, that the Meſſiah ſhould be one of his ſeed; and what he believed concerning him, and in him for, was graciouſly accepted, and placed to his account, for righteouſneſs to eternal life. (See the note on *Rom.* iv. 3.) And upon the proof he gave of the truth of this faith in offering up his Son, from whom the promiſed Meſſiah was to come, as believing *that God was able to raiſe him up even from the dead*, (Heb. xi. 19.) The Lord ſpoke with high approbation of this ſignal evidence of his faith, ſaying, after the manner of men, *Now I know that thou feareſt God; ſeeing thou haſt not with-held thy ſon, thine only ſon:* (Gen. xxii. 12.) And he was afterwards called *the friend of God*, (2 Chron. xx. 7. and Iſa. xli. 8.) as one in covenant with him, (which was ſolemnly renewed and ratified, with an addition of more explicit promiſes, on this occaſion, *Gen.* xxii. 16,—18.) and as one, that had manifeſted the moſt dutiful and affectionate obedience to his command, and was owned as his peculiar favourite, and taken into the neareſt communion with him, as his friend.

24 Ye ſee then how that by works a

24 Ye therefore may plainly diſcern from hence, that a true believer's character is juſtified againſt a charge

NOTE.

apoſtle *Paul*, to confute thoſe *ſelf-juſticiaries* that were for depending on their own works, as the ground of their acceptance with God to eternal life, ſhews that *juſtification in his ſight* is only by faith in Chriſt and his righteouſneſs, without any mixture of works, as ingredients into it; though it be not by ſuch a faith in him, as is not productive of good works, they being inſeparable from all ſaving *faith of the operation of God.*

a man is juſtified, and not by faith only.

charge of hypocriſy, or of empty ſpeculation and profeſſion, by the good works he produces, as the fruit of his faith, and not by mere pretences to faith, which is dead, as being alone, without ſuitable works. (*ver.* 17.)

25 Likewiſe alſo, was not Rahab the harlot juſtified by works, when ſhe had received the meſſengers, and had ſent them out another way.

25 I would alſo inſtance in another perſon, even a *Gentile*, whoſe faith was not ſo ſtrong as *Abraham*'s; Was not the character of *Rahab* the harlot, who dwelt at *Jericho*, juſtified by her works, which unqueſtionably ſhewed that ſhe firmly believed God would certainly deliver that city up to *Iſrael*, (ſee the notes on *ver.* 21. and *Heb.* xi. 31.) when, upon that faith, ſhe kindly entertained the meſſengers, which *Joſhua* ſent to ſpy out the land, and directed them to make their eſcape in a way that might prevent their falling into the hands of their enemies, who ſought to kill them; and engaged the ſpies to ſhew kindneſs to her and her father's houſe, and ſave them alive? (*Joſh.* ii. 1,—16.) By theſe examples you plainly ſee how neceſſary works of obedience are to demonſtrate the ſincerity of any one's faith in every caſe whatſoever.

26 For as the body without the ſpirit is dead, ſo faith without works is dead alſo.

26 For it appears from all this, that as the human body without breath, or without a ſoul to animate it, is a loathſome dead carcaſe, very offenſive, and utterly incapable of diſcharging any functions of this life; ſo all that ſort of faith that is not efficacious for bringing forth good works, which are the inſeparable effects and tokens of a living faith, really is, and ſhews itſelf to be, entirely dead and deteſtable in a ſpiritual ſenſe.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How natural is it for carnal minds to judge according to outward appearance! And to be influenced by the gay dreſs and ſplendid ornaments of the rich, to give them an unjuſtifiable preference; and by the mean apparel of the poor, to uſe them with contempt and ſcorn, whatever their reſpective religious characters be! Surely, this ſort of partiality proceeds from a very corrupt biaſs of the heart. But how unſuitable is this to the temper and behaviour of true believers in Jeſus Chriſt! The profeſſors of his name ought to conſider, that God has moſtly choſen the poor of this world to faith and all its riches here, and to the inheritance of his heavenly kingdom hereafter, which he has promiſed, without reſpect of perſons on external accounts, to all that heartily love him; and the poor among them, as much as the rich, are members of the Lord of Glory. They ſhould likewiſe recollect, that wickedneſs, oppreſſion, and blaſphemous reproaches on the bleſſed name of Chriſt, by which it is their honour to be called, chiefly reign among perſons of rank and figure in the world; and that, though decent reſpect is to be paid to all, according to their civil ſtations; yet favouring the rich rather than the poor, in religious affairs, or in matters of right and wrong, is exceeding ſinful. It is a tranſgreſſion of the moral law, by a breach of which, were it only in one point, a man becomes guilty of breaking its whole ſyſtem, and as really affronts the whole of its divine authority, which equally enjoins obedience to every one of its precepts, as if he had broke them all; and it is a direct violation of that noble comprehenſive law, which requires us to love our neighbours as ourſelves; yea, is utterly contrary to the whole tenor of the goſpel of the grace of God, which may be called the law of liberty,

liberty, but leaves no room for any to expect favour and mercy in the judgment of the great day, who are not constrained by its endearments to shew love and mercy to the poor, especially of the household of faith. What signify fine words of pity and compassion, and empty wishes of all needful supplies to hungry and naked Christians, without doing any thing, according to our opportunities and abilities, for their relief? They are all mere pretences and hypocrisy. And must we not, with equal truth, pronounce that all notions and professions of *faith*, unless it be productive of, and evidenced by good works, is a vain and dead *faith?* It can never be proved to be otherwise. Though *Abraham*'s and *Rahab*'s works did not justify their persons before God, yet they justified their faith, and shewed it to be true and genuine before men, as it was apparently practical in them severally; but a bare assent of the mind, without holy effects on the heart and life, is no better than the faith of devils, who believe there is one God, and tremble for fear of him, as all mere notionalists in religion one day will. Upon the whole then, it must be concluded that faith without works is as dead and offensive to God, as any human carcase, that has no soul to enliven and actuate it, can be to us. And he is a vain man indeed, who imagines that such a faith can save him.

CHAP. III.

The apostle cautions against an arrogant assuming temper and behaviour, and against the mischief of an unsanctified and unruly tongue, 1,—13. *and shews the excellency of heavenly wisdom, which discovers itself in purity, meekness, and peace, in opposition to that which is litigious, carnal, and worldly,* 14,—18.

TEXT.

MY brethren be not many masters, knowing that we shall receive the greater condemnation.

2 For in many things we offend all. If any man offend not in word, the same *is* a perfect man, *and* able also to bridle the whole body.

PARAPHRASE.

TAKE heed, my Christian brethren, lest many of you affect to be (διδασκαλοι) teachers of others without sufficient qualifications for it; and much more, lest they give way, like the *Jewish* doctors, to a magisterial and censorious temper in matters of religion; as being fully convinced that the more any of us indulge and act according to it, the greater will be our sin, and the more severe our sentence of condemnation at the last day. (*Mat.* vii. 1,—5.)

2 For it must be owned that all, even the best of us, are daily guilty of many slips and falls, that are transgressions of both tables of God's holy law, offensive to him and to our fellow-creatures, which should make us very humble and modest in our thoughts of ourselves, and sparing in our censures of others. But if any one, like *David*, (Ps. xxxix. 1.) is enabled to keep a bridle upon his tongue, that it utter no opprobrious, false, or other sinful words, from a predominance of any corrupt or excessive passion; (see *chap.* i. 21, 26.) he is a sincere believer and finished Christian; (see the note on 1 *Cor* ii. 6.) is a man of rich attainments in knowledge and experience, integrity and holiness; and is furnished with such divine assistances, as are sufficient to curb all the irregularities of his conduct, and to spread an amiable influence through all the members of his body, and the whole behaviour

behaviour of his life, to the advantage of every religious and civil body that he is related to.

3 Behold, we put bits in the horſes mouths, that they may obey us; and we turn about their whole body.

3 To illuſtrate the benefit of a due government of the tongue, obſerve how we deal with the horſes we ride upon. We do not let them run at random, but bridle them with bits in their mouths, to check, and reſtrain their mettleſome ſallies, and direct their courſe that they may move according to our pleaſure; and by this means we turn their whole bodies to the right or the left, and into one and another road, juſt as we think proper.

4 Behold alſo the ſhips, which though they be ſo great, and are driven of fierce winds, yet are they turned about with a very ſmall helm, whitherſoever the governor liſteth.

4 Obſerve alſo how men uſe to manage the largeſt ſhips at ſea in ſailing; which though they are ſuch huge veſſels, and ſometimes toſſed about and driven out of their courſe by contrary and tempeſtuous winds, are nevertheleſs turned about and directed into their due bearings again, by ſo very ſmall an inſtrument as the rudder, which way ſoever he at the helm is minded to ſteer them.

5 Even ſo the tongue is a little member, and boaſteth great things. Behold, how great a matter a little fire kindleth!

5 In like manner, a man's tongue is indeed a very ſmall member, in compariſon with the whole bulk of his body; and as it is of great uſe, when properly managed, under the influence of divine grace, for directing the whole ſeries of life; ſo, if it be left under the power and conduct of an unſanctified carnal heart, it talks at an extravagant rate with all the airs of haughtineſs and contempt of others. And pray take notice how, by injurious language, it, like a ſpark of fire in the midſt of combuſtible matter, kindles a terrible flame of contention and confuſion all around it.

6 And the tongue *is* a fire, a world of iniquity: ſo is the tongue amongſt our members, that it defileth the whole body, and ſetteth on fire the courſe of nature; and it is ſet on fire of hell.

6 And an unruly, furious, and abuſive tongue is really one of the worſt of fires: It vents a great deal of ſin; is the outlet of the whole ſource of wickedneſs that lies in a man's heart; (*Matth.* xv. 18.) and is the cauſe of abundance of iniquity among others; ſuch a miſchievous and duſtructive member is this little one amidſt the other members of our bodies, that, by its exhorbitant licentiouſneſs, it ſpreads guilt and defilement through the whole man, and kindles ſuch wrath and anger in our own and other people's paſſions, as throw the whole courſe of the moral world into a pernicious ferment, which runs through (τον τροχον της γενεσεως) the whole circle of every generation, and the whole rotation of life, from youth to old age: And as all this evil is of a helliſh nature, and is kindled and blown up by the diabolical influence of the accuſer of the brethren, and father of lies; ſo the tongue, together with the man who lays no reſtraint upon it, will at length be tormented in the unquenchable flames of hell fire, (*Luke* xvi. 24.) and

that

that most justly, since such a violent tongue is more refractory and unmanageable, than the wildest and fiercest of all the lower ranks of creatures.

7 For every kind of beasts, and of birds, and of serpents, and things in the sea, is tamed, and hath been tamed of mankind:

7 For all sorts of savage beasts and wild fowls, and creeping animals, (ἑρπετων) even venemous serpents, and voracious fishes and monsters of the sea, (δαμαζεται) are by human labour and art subdued and kept within bounds, and have been brought under confinement and restraint, and mastered by mankind, who still retain something of the original grant of dominion over them. (*Gen.* i. 26.)

8 But the tongue can no man tame; *it is* an unruly evil, full of deadly poison.

8 But when any one's tongue launches out in revilings, falsehoods, and other malignant speeches, under the power of strong, furious, and vile passions, it is more untractable than all these; no man upon earth can master it by his own power and skill; nor can any other man gain an entire conquest over it: It is a most ungovernably evil instrument, spitting out the venom of pride, malice, envy, reproach, and falsehood, and all sorts of wickedness, which are as destructive to a man's own soul, and to the welfare of society, as the most mortal poison is to the body: *The poison of asps*, the most desperate of all others, *is under* such a man's *lips*. (Rom. iii. 13.)

9 Therewith bless we God, even the Father; and therewith curse we men, which are made after the similitude of God.

9 An unsanctified tongue runs so much at random, that some of us, who as men, and much more as professing Christians, ought, like *David*, to count it our glory, (*Ps.* xxx. 12.) and to employ it in celebrating the praises of the Lord, use it, one while, for speaking honourably of God, praying to him, and offering up thanksgivings and praises in public and private, even to the Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, and of all believers in him, the Father of Mercies, and the Author of our beings and of all our enjoyments; and, at another time, we abuse it, pouring out revilings and horrid imprecations and curses upon our fellow-creatures, for whom we ought to have a reverence, as they were originally created after the image of God, in knowledge, righteousness, and true holiness, and are still formed after his likeness in the natural faculties of their rational souls, and in their dominion over the creature; and are renewed according to his holy image by regenerating grace.

10 Out of the same mouth proceedeth blessing and cursing. My brethren, these things ought not so to be.

10 So that out of one and the same mouth come forth blessings and praises in one mood, and curses in another. Certainly, my Christian brethren, these contrary uses of the same tongue are monstrously incongruous and absurd; and ought, by no means, to have any place in those who make a profession of Christ and his gospel.

11 Doth a fountain ſend forth at the ſame place ſweet *water* and bitter?

11 They are as utterly inconſiſtent with true religion and godlineſs, as it would be to ſuppoſe that ſtreams of contrary qualities proceed from the ſame opening of one fountain. Did ye ever know? Or is it poſſible, in the nature of things, that one and the ſame ſpring could guſh out at the ſame place, and flow abroad in ſtreams of water, ſome of which are quite freſh, and agreeable to the palate, and others entirely brackiſh and diſtaſteful?

12 Can the fig-tree, my brethren, bear olive-berries? either a vine figs? ſo *can* no fountain both yield ſalt water and freſh.

12 Or can a fig tree, my brethren, produce the fruit which grows only upon olive trees? Or was it ever known, that a grape vine brought forth figs? Why, full as inconſiſtent is it to ſuppoſe that a man's heart, the fountain from whence all his words proceed, ſhould freely and habitually vent itſelf in ways of talking, that are of as directly contrary a nature, as the ſalt water of the ſea, and the ſweet water of the fineſt ſpring are one to the other.

13 Who *is* a wiſe man and endued with knowledge amongſt you? let him ſhew out of a good converſation his works with meekneſs of wiſdom.

13 Who is there then among you, that would approve himſelf to be wiſe toward God, and for himſelf and others; prudent in his conduct; and endued with the true knowledge of God, of Chriſt, and of himſelf; and with a ſpiritual diſcerning of the abſurdity and ſelf-contradiction of theſe things? Let it be his great care and concern, that, by an honourable deportment in the church and in the world, he may evidently practiſe all manner of good works, in the whole courſe of his converſation, with a meek and humble ſpirit, which proceeds from, and diſcovers the trueſt wiſdom.

14 But if ye have bitter envying and ſtrife in your hearts, glory not, and lie not againſt the truth.

14 But if, inſtead of ſuch a laudable temper and behaviour, ye give a looſe to your ſinful paſſions; and your hearts are full of envious, quarrelſome and contentious diſpoſitions and deſigns, which are a bitter torment to your own ſouls, and, when breaking out in words, are grievouſly ſtinging and wounding to others: Never be fond or boaſt of ſuch a malignant temper, that is ſo directly contrary to the meek and humble ſpirit of the goſpel; nor dare to conceive, or utter any falſehood to put a fine gloſs upon it; nor make any hypocritical pretences to ſincerity or prudence in ſuch a courſe of life.

15 This wiſdom deſcendeth not from above, but *is* earthly, ſenſual, deviliſh.

15 Whatever any may think of it, let me tell you, that this ſort of pretended wiſdom does not come from heaven, nor is God the author of it; but it proceeds entirely from an exceſs of earthly and ſenſual propenſions to the things of this world, which unregenerate men are under the power of; and is excited by the devil himſelf, bears his image, pleaſes him, and promotes his intereſts and deſigns for doing miſchief.

16 For

16 For where envying and strife *is*, there *is* confusion, and every evil work.

16 For wherever an envious, censorious, and litigious spirit is indulged, and breaks forth from the heart through the lips, its natural tendency, and ordinary effect, is nothing but disturbance and destruction to the peace and happiness of a man's own soul, and of all about him, together with every other kind of iniquity and calamity.

17 But the wisdom that is from above, is first pure, then peaceable, gentle, *and* easy to be intreated, full of mercy and good fruits, without partiality, and without hypocrisy.

17 But the wisdom that is heavenly and divine, as *coming down from the Father of Lights*, (chap. i. 17.) and tending to heavenly happiness, is just the reverse of all this: It has, in the first place, a strict regard to purity of doctrine and manners in heart, speech, and behaviour; and then, as far as is consistent with truth and holiness, it studies the things that make for peace; and in order thereunto, it disposes the soul to be mild and courteous in its treatment of others, and *in meekness to instruct those that oppose themselves*; (2 Tim. ii. 24, 25.) and to be easily persuaded to all that is good, to be open to conviction, and attend to all reasonable considerations for condescension and forbearance; it also abounds in acts of kindness and compassion to the poor and afflicted, and in every other fruit of righteousness; together with a generosity that has no respect of persons, and that lays aside all severity and partiality in judging and condemning others; and with a sincerity that is free from dissimulation. (*Rom.* xii. 9.)

18 And the fruit of righteousness is sown in peace of them that make peace.

18 And the principle, productive of this righteous behaviour, is sown, like good seed, in the peace of a believer's own mind, and of his Christian brethren, and of the world all around him, as in a fertile soil; and shall be reaped in a plentiful harvest of prosperity here, and for ever hereafter, by those, who, in a way of spiritual wisdom, are disposed unto, and lay themselves out in promoting, such a pure and holy peace.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What cause have we to be modest and humble, instead of indulging an arrogant and censorious temper towards our Christian brethren, while we consider, in how many things we all offend against God and them! And what an aggravation would inobservance of our *own* and severity on *others* faults be, of self-condemnation at the great day! How important is a due government of the tongue! He that obtains help from God to rule his own tongue, is a great proficient in religion, and well qualified for ordering his whole conversation aright. Though the most mettlesome horses are governed by a bit and bridle, and the largest ships, when driven by contrary and boisterous winds, are reduced to their proper course by a small rudder; and though the most wild and savage animals of the earth, air, and sea, may be, and have been brought into subjection by human art; yet no man of himself can get such a mastery over his tongue, as thoroughly to bridle its excess; nor can any other man effectually cure its malignity. Though it be but a little member, and, if well managed, is of great use; yet when it flies out into bitter expressions, it is an unruly evil, and is like a spark of fire, that sets abundance of combustible matter into a flame. It is indeed the worst of fire, that spreads confusion, defilement,

and destruction through the whole man, and amongst all around him; derives its original from hell; and is in danger of everlasting fire, without one drop of water to cool it. But O how monstrously absurd, and inconsistent is it for the same mouth to utter the praises of God, and horrid imprecations upon men that are formed after his image! This is as directly contrary to the Christian character, as it would be to suppose that one and the same fountain can send forth sweet and bitter, fresh and salt water at the same opening; or that a fig-tree can bear olives, or a vine figs. If therefore the heart and tongue are full of envy, animosity, and angry contentions, we ought to be ashamed, instead of glorying in them. For if any, that boast of their wisdom, give way to these pernicious evils, it is all a false pretence; it is only the wisdom of the flesh, which proceeds from earthly and sensual passions and appetites, and is propagated by the devil himself after his own likeness. But he who, with a meek and humble spirit, walks honourably, as becomes the gospel of Christ, is endued with the most excellent wisdom and spiritual understanding. This man's wisdom has its original from heaven, and shall issue in heavenly happiness; it has a strict regard to purity in principle and practice; and then, in full consistency with this, it studies the things that make for peace, with all affability, and persuadeableness to every thing that is right; and abounds in compassion to the afflicted, and in all beneficence, as occasions require, without any partial respect of persons, or hypocritical pretences to more than we really mean. And O the blessed fruit of such a wise and holy deportment! They, who thus study and endeavour to promote this excellent sort of prosperity and peace, are therein sowing seed, which will spring up to their own comfort here, and everlasting joy hereafter.

CHAP. IV.

The apostle cautions against corrupt affections, as the root of wars and quarrels, and the bane of prayer; and against an inordinate love of this world, as enmity with God, who gives grace to the humble, 1,—6. *Directs proud and carnal professors to submit and betake themselves to God, and resist the devil, and to abandon and lament their sinful courses, in order to their being exalted,* 7,—10. *and exhorts all professing Christians to speak candidly one of another, and to undertake no affairs of life without a constant regard to the will and providence of God,* 11,—17.

TEXT.

FROM whence *come* wars and fightings among you? *come they* not hence, *even* of your lusts, that war in your members?

PARAPHRASE.

AS I would fain excite you to a just abhorrence of the evils that lie in opposition to the peace but now recommended, (*chap.* iii. 18.) Let me ask you, and leave the answer to your own consciences, What is it that gives rise to, and foments the dreadful contentions, animosities and broils, that have spread so much misery and confusion among mankind, and professing Christians, as they have among you of the *Jewish* nation? * Does not the root and source of them

NOTE.

* Some have thought that the apostle here refers to the seditions, tumults, and wars that raged about this time among the *Jews* in their quarrels one with another, and rebellions against the *Romans*, to throw off their yoke, and obtain to themselves that temporal dominion, which they vainly imagined they had a divine right to; and that some *Jewish* Christians joined therein from their carnal notions of the Messiah, as though he were to set up a temporal kingdom among

them all lie in your corrupt affections, such as pride, envy, covetousness, and an immoderate thirst after dominion over others, or after the riches, honours, or pleasures of this world, each of which intemperate appetites contend for the mastery in all the powers of your souls, and over all the members of your bodies, (see the note on *Rom.* vii. 5.) and all together war against them, to their defilement, injury, and ruin, and against the dictates of reason, religion, and conscience, and even against the Spirit of God himself in his holy operations?

2 Ye lust, and have not: ye kill, and desire to have, and cannot obtain: ye fight and war, yet ye have not, because ye ask not.

2 Ye inordinately desire and pursue a gratification of your guilty passions; and cannot compass your criminal designs: Ye are ready to devour one another; and have an envious reach (ζηλουτε) after the possessions of others; and are not able (επιτυχειν) to gain the advantages, which ye so greedily covet; much less can ye find your happiness in them: Ye still continue to strive and contend furiously for victory, wealth, and grandeur; and yet fail of obtaining your own ends, and so meet with perpetual disappointments, because ye do not seriously ask counsel of God to direct your way, as to what ye ought to do, and to succeed your attempts, as far as they may be agreeable to his will.

3 Ye ask, and receive not, because ye ask amiss, that ye may consume it upon your lusts.

3 Or, if at any time ye pray for prosperity in your affairs, your prayers are not answered; because your principles, motives, and ends, in asking the things you would have, are all wrong; not, as they ought to be, that ye may use them for the glory of God, and your own and others real good, but that ye may riot upon them, and spend them in a profuse indulgence to your own vanity, ambition, and luxury, which is very offensive to God.

4 Ye adulterers, and adulteresses, know ye not that the friendship of the world is enmity with God? Whosoever therefore will be a friend of the world, is the enemy of God.

4 Whosoever ye be, whether of the male, or female sex, that under a religious character, as God's covenant-people, have such eager appetites after the pleasures and enjoyments of this world, as alienate your hearts from him, ye are guilty of no less sin than spiritual adultery, in admitting a competitor with him, to whom ye are visibly betrothed, as your spiritual husband. Do you not understand and consider so plain a point as this, that an excessive fondness for the great and good things of this world, and a conformity to worldly-minded men, in following their

NOTE.

among his disciples, and make them lords of the universe.——But as the national wars were in *Judea*, and are supposed to have been after the time of writing this epistle, we may rather understand the apostle to speak of contentions and quarrels *in general*, which on various occasions prevailed among the *Jewish* professors of Christianity; and, alas! have sadly broke out among other professors of it, all along, in public and private life, to this very day.

their ſinful courſes to ingratiate yourſelves with them, and to obtain thoſe things, ſtand in direct oppoſition to the holy nature and will of God, and are utterly inconſiſtent with that ſupreme love and affection, which ye owe to him? (1 *John* ii. 15, 16.) Whoever therefore is ſo attached to the things of this world, as to place his chief happineſs in them, and will court the friendſhip of the men of this world, at any rate, to procure them, is in heart an enemy to, inſtead of a friend and lover of God, and takes the part of his adverſaries, inſtead of ſiding with him.

5 Do ye think that the ſcripture ſaith in vain, The ſpirit that dwelleth in us luſteth to envy?

5 Are ye ſo vain as to ſuppoſe, that thoſe ſcriptures of the Old Teſtament ſtand on record to no good purpoſe, or are not worth regarding, which ſtrongly remonſtrate, in many paſſages, againſt pride, envy, covetouſneſs, and the like, and which give us ſuch a view of the corruption of human nature, as ſhews that the temper, which abides and powerfully works in us, 'till we are renewed by grace, is ſo impetuous and ambitious in its purſuits after earthly things, as to carry the ſoul into envious thoughts of thoſe that have more of them, than we have ourſelves *? Or, on the contrary, do ye vainly imagine, that the Spirit of God which dwells in us, who are true believers, excites ſuch a carnal worldly diſpoſition in us? No, this cannot be the nature, tendency, or deſign of his holy influence upon us.

6 But he giveth more grace. Wherefore he ſaith, God reſiſteth the proud, but giveth grace unto the humble.

6 But, on the contrary, in whomſoever the Spirit dwells, he, or God by him, gives them ſuch a gracious impreſſion as tends to humility, ſelf-denial, love, and all goodneſs; and gives a greater abundance of it, than to leave them under the power of any corrupt affections. Therefore, to encourage their hopes and prayers for all needful aſſiſtances, he ſpeaks in his holy word, (*Pſ.* xviii. 27. and *Prov.* iii. 34. and xxix. 23.) as our bleſſed Lord himſelf alſo doth, (*Mat.* xxiii. 12. and *Luke* xviii. 14.) to this effect, God ſets himſelf, as it were in battle array, (ἀντιτάσσεται) with indignation

NOTE.

* By *the ſpirit that dwells in us* ſome underſtand *the corrupt diſpoſition*, which is naturally in our hearts; and others, *the Spirit of God*, who is often ſaid to *dwell* in true believers. If we take it in the *firſt* ſenſe, the whole verſe is to be conſidered as *one* queſtion; or if we would take it in the *laſt*, it muſt be divided into *two*, as in the paraphraſe; one or other of which appears to be the moſt probable ſenſe among the numerous obſcure interpretations that have been given of this verſe, a very large collection of which is made by *Eſtius*, *Paræus*, and others. And if the *laſt* of theſe interpretations be admitted, which is ſupported by criticiſms in *Glaſſius*, and Dr. *Whitby*, then the relative *he*, at the beginning of the next verſe, refers to *the Spirit*, or to *God*, ver. 4. as working by him. But which ever of theſe ways we go into for explaining the words, *what the ſcripture ſays* ſeems not to refer to any particular paſſage, but to the doctrine of the Old Teſtament, as *that* may be gathered from many places, which are recited by *Paræus*.

indignation and diſdain, againſt thoſe that are ambitious and haughty, ſelf-conceited and ſelf-ſufficient, as placing their confidence and happineſs in the things of this life, or in their own wiſdom, or ſtrength, or deſerts; he drives them away from his gracious preſence, who thus ſet themſelves againſt him; and defeats their aims at honour and eſteem among men. But he extends his favour to, and beſtows his ſpecial grace, with growing ſtrength and vigour, upon the lowly in heart, who have ſuch humbling thoughts of themſelves, and of the emptineſs and vanity of all creature-enjoyments, as to place their hope and happineſs entirely in him. (See *Prov.* iii. 34.) So that to thoſe, to whom he has given the grace of *humility*, he gives ſtill more grace of every kind, according to their wants and deſires; and exalts them in his favour, and in the eyes of all good men. (*ver.* 10.)

7 Submit yourſelves therefore to God. Reſiſt the devil, and he will flee from you.

7 In humble dependence therefore on his free favour and gracious influence, yield yourſelves up, with an obediential and unreſerved ſubjection, to the guidance and diſpoſals, authority and will of God, as manifeſted by his word and providence; and be contented with ſuch things as ye have. Whatever Satan may ſuggeſt againſt this; or whatever attempts he may make by his ſubtle devices, or fiery darts, to diſhearten you in, or draw you off from, the way of duty, give no place to him; (*Eph.* iv. 27.) but *be ſtrong in the Lord, and in the power of his might, and put on the whole armour of God, that ye may be able to withſtand*, and *reſiſt him ſtedfaſtly in the faith*; (Eph. vi. 10, 11, 13. and 1 Pet. v. 9.) and he will flee from you, like a vanquiſhed enemy that dares no longer to encounter you.

8 Draw nigh to God, and he will draw nigh to you. Cleanſe *your* hands, ye ſinners, and purify *your* hearts ye double minded.

8 And as ever ye would effectually maintain your ground, prevail againſt him, and get rid of all his temptations, Be earneſt and importunate in humble and fiducial approaches to God, through Chriſt, on a throne of grace, in a way of *duty*, and he will certainly come near to you in a way of *mercy* and *faithfulneſs*, for your direction, relief, and comfort, according to his promiſe. (*Jer.* xxix. 13.) And whereas ſome among you have, through the ſuggeſtions of Satan and your own evil hearts, become grievous ſinners before God, ſee that you waſh your hands in innocence, and ſo compaſs the altar of the Lord, (*Pſ.* xxvi. 6.) lifting *up holy hands* in your prayers, *without wrath and doubting*; (1 Tim. ii. 8.) and remember that if *ye regard iniquity in your hearts, the Lord will not hear you.* Pſ. lxvi. 18.) Beg of him therefore to enable you to cleanſe your hands from violence and blood, extortion and bribes, and every other ſin, with which they have been

been defiled; and to purge your hearts from pride, covetouſneſs, envy, and the whole ſource of iniquity, which work within you, that ye may abhor, renounce, and utterly depart from them; and may be ſo thoroughly reformed in heart and life, as to behave no longer like double-minded profeſſors, whoſe thoughts and ſervices are divided between God and the world. (*Chap.* i. 8. ſee the paraphraſe there.)

9 Be afflicted, and mourn, and weep: let your laughter be turned to mourning, and *your* joy to heavineſs.

9 In ſerious reflection upon all your abominations, let your ſouls be deeply impreſſed with penitential ſorrow, as thoſe that ſincerely and bitterly lament, and weep over them, and for the miſeries they have brought upon you, or expoſed you to: Let all your jollity, mirth, and gaiety, which ye have ſhamefully indulged in gratifying your ſenſual appetites, be turned into ingenuous and evangelical mournings; and all your carnal pleaſure into a religious grief and ſadneſs of heart, on account of your provocations, and for fear of God's judgments.

10 Humble yourſelves in the ſight of the Lord, and he ſhall lift you up.

10 In this manner, lay yourſelves at the foot of God with the loweſt proſtration and ſelf-abaſement, as offenders of his ſacred Majeſty, and with an affecting conviction that he knows your hearts and principally looks at them, and obſerves all the ſecret workings of corruption, on one hand, and of contrite ſorrow on the other, that paſs within them: And he, in his own time and way, will revive your drooping ſouls with a ſenſe of his pardoning, and with recovering grace; will raiſe you up above all your fears and troubles, temporal and ſpiritual; and will exalt you to honour among his people in this world, and to immortal glory in the world to come.

11 Speak not evil one of another, brethren. He that ſpeaketh evil of *his* brother, and judgeth his brother ſpeaketh evil of the law, and judgeth the law: but if thou judge the law, thou art not a doer of the law, but a judge.

11 But to return to the vices of the tongue, (*chap.* iii. 5, &c.) Be very cautious, my brethren in the Lord, of cenſuring and reviling one another, or of aggravating and needleſsly expoſing each other's faults; and much more of raiſing and propagating falſe reports to the prejudice of fellow Chriſtians: For he that ſlanders his Chriſtian brother, to whom, as ſuch, he ought to be moſt kindly affectionate, and that takes upon himſelf raſhly to judge and condemn him, without any juſt cauſe, or for things which are lawful to him, reproaches the law of God itſelf; and practically arraigns and condemns the wiſdom, equity, holineſs and goodneſs, both of the law, which allows of the things he condemns, and of the law, which requires him to *love his neighbour as himſelf*, (chap. ii. 8.) and forbids his *going up and down as a tale-bearer among his people*, (Lev. xix. 16.) and raſhly *judging* others, *leſt he himſelf be judged.* (Matth. vii. 1.) But if any of you pretend to ſet up for

for censors of the law itself, you do not act the part of a subject in obeying its commands, but assume to yourself the authority of a judge, which do not belong to you.

12 There is one law-giver, who is able to save, and to destroy. Who art thou that judgest another?

12 To convince you of the evil of this, consider that there is only one Author and Giver of the law, and none but he has authority to enact and execute it, relating to religion and conscience: He therefore has the sole right of being the Lord and Judge of his own law; and he alone is able to distribute its rewards to the wrongfully accused, in a temporal and eternal salvation; and its punishments to uncharitable condemners, in present and everlasting destruction. Who then are you, a poor, vain, weak, and fallible, yea, sinful creature, that you should take upon you to judge and condemn any one, who is accountable only to his own Lord and Master, and must be saved, or lost for ever, according to the sentence he shall pass upon him? (*Rom.* xiv. 4.)

13 Go to now, ye that say, To-day or to-morrow, we will go into such a city, and continue there a year, and buy, and sell, and get gain:

13 Let me now a little expostulate with those of you that are so worldly-minded, and so thoughtless of God and his providence, as to promise yourselves long life and prosperity upon earth, and say, with a peremptory air of self-sufficiency and independent confidence, We will go to-day or to-morrow, or whenever we please, to this or the other trading city; and there we will stay a considerable time, and (if need be) for a whole year together, and pursue our traffic or merchandise in buying and selling various sorts of goods, and so enrich ourselves by our own wisdom, care, and diligence.

14 Whereas ye know not what *shall be* on the morrow: for what *is* your life? it is even a vapour that appeareth for a little time, and then vanisheth away.

14 This is all presumptuous, irreligious, not to say atheistical language, in the hearts or mouths of such frail mortals as ye are, who, together with all your affairs, are in a precarious situation, ever liable to numberless disappointments, and entirely dependent on the sovereign will and providence of God, and know not what a day may bring forth, what turn your circumstances may take, or whether ye yourselves shall be in the land of the living another day: For, pray consider, what is your life itself, that ye should talk with such confident assurance of what ye will do for time to come? Ye have no security for any, the least, continuance of it, which may suddenly and unawares be cut off; much less can ye be sure of opportunity and ability to compass your designs, one day or moment beyond the present. Your breath is in your nostrils, and your life, with all that depends upon it relating to this world, may well be compared to a fleeting vapour, which rises from the earth or from water, and is visible for a little while,

and then is immediately ſcattered and loſt in the atmoſphere, and is ſeen no more.

15 For that ye *ought* to ſay, If the Lord will, we ſhall live, and do this, or that.

15 A contrary way of thinking and ſpeaking therefore becomes you; and whatever ſchemes or projects ye have formed, and would purſue, it ought always to be with this humble and neceſſary *proviſo*, If it ſhall pleaſe God to favour our views, we ſhall continue in life for diſcharging the duties of our ſtations; and then, in a dependence on his guidance, aſſiſtance, and bleſſing, we intend to tranſact this and the other buſineſs, which, by his will, we may have opportunity and ability to engage in; ſtill leaving events with him, *who is our life, and the length of our days; in whoſe hand is our breath, and whoſe are all our ways.* (Deut. xxx. 20. and Dan. v. 23.)

16 But now ye rejoice in your boaſtings: all ſuch rejoicing is evil.

16 But now, inſtead of talking in this humble creaturely and Chriſtian-like ſtrain, which is ſo honourable to God, and ſuitable to your ſtate of unworthineſs, and of entire dependence upon him for *life and breath, and all things*, (Acts xvii. 25.) Thoſe of you that leave him out of your thoughts, and of your ſecular employments, in the manner but now mentioned, glory in your own ſufficiency, which ye ſpeak of with a boaſting air of ſelf-confidence. Alas! all ſuch ſort of glorying is very ſhameful; it is abominable and fooliſh, injurious to yourſelves, and a bad example to others; and is exceeding ſinful and affrontive to God, *whoſe kingdom rules over all:* (Pſal. ciii. 19.) And, were ye to reflect ſeriouſly upon it, your own conſciences, as profeſſing Chriſtians, could not but tell you that it is ſo.

17 Therefore to him that knoweth to do good, and doth it not, to him it is ſin.

17 This therefore is a high aggravation of your crime, ſince in this, as well as all other caſes, the man who knows what is right and good, acceptable to God, and ſuitable to the relation he ſtands in to him, and yet acts in direct contradiction to his light, thereby renders his ſin abundantly greater, and more inexcuſable and ſelf-condemning, than theirs who do the ſame thing, but, through mere ignorance, have no notion of the evil of it, to reſtrain them from it; and the ſinner, againſt the convictions of his own conſcience, ſhall be more ſeverely puniſhed than others, in the great day of account. (See *Luke* xii. 47, 48.) Mt. 9. 41

RECOLLECTIONS.

Alas! What dreadful work do the luſts of pride, covetouſneſs, and envy make in the world! Hence proceed wars, and all manner of diſcords that are deſtructive to civil and religious ſociety, and to a man's own ſoul: They carry him into wicked deſires and attempts, which can turn to no good account; and either make him caſt off prayer, or pervert its ends in aſking temporal advantages, that he may gratify his own corruptions, inſtead of glorifying God, and doing good with them.

No

No wonder, that such carnal prayers are not answered.—O what an enemy to God, and adulterous disaffection to him in professors of his name, is an excessive fondness for any thing of this world! How justly doth the scripture condemn this sensual temper, which naturally works in us! And how contrary is it to the suggestions and influences of the Holy Spirit, who dwells in true believers, and freely gives grace, with all needful increases of it, to humble souls; but rejects the proud with abhorrence and disdain! How unsuitable to our creaturely dependence and Christian character is it, to form and prosecute schemes for this world, without a religious sense of, and dependence upon the providence of God, as if our times and the success of our affairs lay in our own hands, though life itself is but as a vapour that soon vanishes away! Surely every thing ought to be undertaken with an eye to God, and submission to his will. A contrary way of thinking and talking is a vain-glorious boast, dishonourable to God, and injurious to ourselves and others. It is indeed a scandal to the Christian name, that all or any of the forementioned impieties should be found among gospel-professors; and it is a high aggravation of their sin to go against the light of their own consciences in practising them. O how earnest should we be in our addresses to God for his grace to enable us to submit to his commanding and disposing will, and in bewailing our iniquities, and humbling ourselves before him for them! And what encouragement have we, in this way, to hope for his reviving presence and liftings up! And if, in a dependence on divine strength, we resist the temptations of the devil, he will find us too hard for him, and flee, like a conquered enemy, before us. But how cautious should we be never to imitate his temper, and give him an advantage over us, by slandering, censuring, and condemning our Christian brethren for little things, or things that may be allowable in them! This is to set up for judges, instead of obeyers of the law; and is a violation of its requirements to love them as ourselves; yea, is an invasion of God's prerogative, who alone is able effectually to vindicate its authority: O may it be unto our salvation, and not to our destruction!

CHAP. V.

The apostle denounces the judgments of God against the rich unbelieving Jews, *who defrauded the poor, and lived in luxury and oppression,* 1,—6. *Exhorts the* Jewish *believers to patience and meekness under their tribulations, which would soon have an end,* 7,—11. *Cautions them against rash swearing,* 12. *Recommends prayer in afflicted, and praise in prosperous circumstances,* 13. *Prescribes prayer and anointing with oil for a miraculous recovery of the sick,* 14, 15. *Directs private Christians to mutual confession of their faults, and mutual prayer,* 16,—18. *And shews the happiness of being instrumental to the conversion of a sinner,* 19, 20.

TEXT.

GO to now, ye rich men, weep, and howl for your miseries that shall come upon *you.*

PARAPHRASE.

COME now, ye carnal unbelieving *Jews,* who abound in worldly wealth, and neither have, nor desire a better portion than the things of this life, let me seriously and closely reason with you about the evil and danger of your ways: Ye, of all others, have the greatest cause for bitter sorrow, even to floods of tears and howling lamentation, which ye must soon be forced to go into, on account of the terrible calamities of every kind, that are ready to fall upon you, unless ye be brought to repentance; and will overtake you wheresoever ye be scattered, and bereave you of all your earthly enjoyments, and

of life itſelf, in the general deſtruction of your nation; * and will be followed with ſtill more dreadful miſeries in an eternal hell.

2 Your riches are corrupted, and your garments are moth-eaten.

2 Your ill-gotten and ill-managed treaſures are cankered at the root; ſuch of them as conſiſt of corn and other fruits of the earth, are hoarded up, till they rot and putrify, and bring rottenneſs into your very ſouls; and ſuch as conſiſt of your wardrobes are laid by, till they be eaten up of moths, and will ſtand you in no ſtead; but, like a gnawing worm, will torment your conſciences for ever.

3 Your gold and ſilver is cankered; and the ruſt of them ſhall be a witneſs againſt you, and ſhall eat your fleſh as it were fire: ye have heaped treaſure together for the laſt days.

3 Your abundance of gold and ſilver lies ruſting in your bags and coffers, inſtead of being employed for the glory of God and the good of others; and will ſoon be as worthleſs and uſeleſs, as old rufty iron, to your ſore diſappointment and vexation, and will not profit you in the day of wrath; (*Prov.* xi. 4.) and the ſinful methods ye have taken to get and diſpoſe of them will bring the worſt of all ruſts upon them; will teſtify againſt you as covetous miſers, that deſerve the ſevereſt indignation of the juſt and holy God; and the guilt ye contract thereby will prey upon your bodies, as well as ſouls, in the fiery deſolation that will conſume you in this world, and in the unquenchable fire in the world to come. Ye have been laying up goods in ſtore for many years, with vain hopes of finding comfort in them at the latter part of a long life; but, in reality, it has been only heaping them up, as ſpoils for your enemies, in the deſtruction of the *Jewiſh* nation, and will ultimately prove to be a dreadful *treaſuring up of wrath, againſt the day of wrath, and revelation of the righteous judgment of God*, &c. (Rom. ii. 5.)

4 Behold, the hire of the labourers, which have reaped down your fields, which is of you kept back by fraud, crieth: and the cries of them which have reaped, are entered into

4 Behold, with horror and aſtoniſhment, what all your gains by griping and oppreſſive means are come to! The juſt wages of the poor labourers, who have reaped your corn with the ſweat of their brows, which ye have fraudulently with-holden, directly contrary to the law of God, (*Lev.* xix. 13. and *Deut.* xxiv. 15.) is a crying ſin, which, like the blood of *Abel*, calls aloud to heaven for juſtice to be ſhewn unto their relief, and your puniſhment: (*Exod.* xxii. 23.

NOTE.

* The apoſtle in this and the following verſes apparently points at the days of ſore deſtruction, that were then ſoon to come upon the *Jewiſh* nation, not only in *Judea*, but afterward with wider extent through diſtant countries, by the ravages of the *Romans*, in the way of God's righteous judgments, for their obſtinate infidelity and other iniquities. But as *that* was an awful ſpecimen of divine wrath, which ſhould be poured out upon them in the world to come, we may, with good propriety, carry the view forward to the final vengeance that will be executed upon all impenitent ſinners at the great day.

to the ears of the Lord of sabaoth.

23. *Isa.* v. 7. and *Habak.* ii. 11.) And the mournful complaints of those, who with toil and labour have gathered in your harvest, are come up as a memorial for them, and against you, before the Lord of Hosts, who hears their cries, and whose kingdom rules over all, to right the injured, and take vengeance on their oppressors.

5 Ye have lived in pleasure on the earth, and been wanton; ye have nourished your hearts, as in a day of slaughter.

5 Ye, like the rich man in the gospel, (*Luke* xvi. 19.) have fared sumptuously every day, and indulged your luxurious appetites, as if all happiness lay in sensual pleasures upon the earth; and have gone into a merry and lascivious course of life: Ye have rioted upon the bounties of Providence, with as much gluttony and profuseness, as though every day were a festival, in which many beasts are slain for sacrifices to be feasted upon with jollity by the offerers and their friends. (*Prov.* vii. 14. and *Isa.* xxii. 13.) But in all this ye have been fattening yourselves, like sheep for the day of slaughter, which is at hand, when *the wicked shall perish, and the enemies of the Lord shall be consumed as the fat of lambs*, &c. (Ps. xxxvii. 20.)

6 Ye have condemned *and* killed the just; *and* he doth not resist you.

6 Nay, over and above all this, ye, like those of your own countrymen that procured the condemnation and death of the Lord Jesus, who is (τον δικαιον) by way of eminence *the holy and just One*, (Acts iii. 14. and vii. 52.) have, under pretended forms of law, persecuted as many righteous servants of his to death as ye could get into your power! And ye have done this to the holy professors of his name, who, like him, never offered the least violence to oppose or injure you. But God, who has hitherto exercised long forbearance toward you, will certainly espouse their cause, and avenge the quarrel of his covenant upon you.

7 Be patient therefore, brethren, unto the coming of the Lord. Behold, the husbandman waiteth for the precious fruit of the earth, and hath long patience for it, until he receive the early and latter rain.

7 These are trying dispensations of providence to you, my Christian brethren; but God permits, and over-rules them for the exercise and improvement of your faith and patience. (*Chap.* i. 3, 4. and 1 *Pet.* i. 6, 7.) And therefore, though it be ever so unrighteous in your enemies to bring tribulations upon you, ye ought to bear them without murmuring at the holy hand that God has in them, and with all long-suffering, meekness, and Christian fortitude, till the Lord Jesus shall come to execute judgment on the *Jewish* nation, and deliver you out of their power; or shall come by death to rid you of all the troubles of this life, as he certainly will in his time, how great or many soever they be. (*Ps.* xxxiv. 19.) Observe, for your instruction, and imitation, that the farmer, when he sows his seed, does not immediately

ly expect a crop, but quietly waits a great while for the proper ſeaſon of reaping the excellent produce of the earth; and continues with patient hope for it, till, by the bleſſing of heaven, he be favoured with ſuch early rains, as may be needful for bringing up the corn; and with ſuch after rains, as ſhall bring it to maturity, and plump the ear for the harveſt.

8 Be ye alſo patient; eſtabliſh your hearts: for the coming of the Lord draweth nigh.

8 In like manner, ye, waiting for heavenly dews to fall upon you, ought to poſſeſs your ſouls in patience, till ye receive the happy fruits of your labours and ſufferings, and to maintain a ſedate and ſettled temper of ſpirit, a ſtedfaſt faith and holy reſolution for God and godlineſs, under all preſent difficulties. And ye need not wax weary and faint in your minds, becauſe ye have not yet received the deliverance which ye hoped for; but may aſſuredly conclude that it will not be long before it be brought to you: For the ſignal coming of Chriſt, with power and great glory, to the deſtruction of the unbelieving *Jews*, and the deliverance of his people from all their cruel perſecutions, which he foretold; (*Luke* xxi. 21, 27.) and the time of your complete redemption from all the calamities of this life, haſtens apace, and is near approaching.

9 Grudge not one againſt another, brethren, leſt ye be condemned: behold the judge ſtandeth before the door.

9 Upon theſe comfortable conſiderations, take heed, my perſecuted brethren, of groaning out your complaints, (μη στεναζετε) through envy, fretfulneſs, and deſire of revenge againſt thoſe of your nation, that oppreſs you; or againſt thoſe of your profeſſing fellow-Chriſtians, that are leſs obnoxious to their rage, as too much favouring their darling notions of a temporal Meſſiah; leſt any of you be condemned for your impatient murmurings and uncharitable cenſures: For behold, the Lord Jeſus, the great Judge of all, is juſt at hand, as ready to *recompenſe tribulation to thoſe that trouble you*, his faithful diſciples; and to *give you reſt* from all your grievances: (2 *Theſſ.* i. 6, 7.) And therefore ye may calmly refer the iſſues of all your troubles to him, in confidence that he will ſoon appear for your help, and ſave you.

10 Take, my brethren, the prophets, who have ſpoken in the name of the Lord, for an example of ſuffering affliction, and of patience.

10 To encourage you hereunto, let me entreat you, my dear Chriſtian brethren, to reflect upon the behaviour of the ancient inſpired and holy prophets under their ſore trials, who were beloved of God, and faithfully delivered their meſſages to the people in his name, by commiſſion from him; let them be called to mind, as noble examples, for your ſupport in ſuffering perſecutions, and for your imitation in patiently enduring them with an entire ſubmiſſion to the will of the Lord.

11 Behold,

11 Behold, we count them happy which endure. Ye have heard of the patience of Job, and have seen the end of the Lord: that the Lord is very pitiful and of tender mercy.

11 Behold, what judgment we who believe make of the afflictions of the children of God, We are so far from thinking them miserable, or out of favour with him, on this account, that we esteem and call them happy creatures, who are enabled to bear them with resignation, faith, and patience; (*chap.* i. 2, 3, 12.) and so *are chastened of the Lord for their profit, that they may be partakers of his holiness, and afterwards reap the peaceable fruits of righteousness* from a sanctified use of them, (*Heb.* xii. 10, 11.) and at last may be eternally saved. (*Matth.* x. 22.) To give you a remarkable instance of this sort, which ye, as conversant with the writings of the Old Testament, cannot be ignorant of, Ye have, doubtless, heard of the patient behaviour of *Job*, that dear and eminent servant of the Lord, with what humble submission and becoming acknowledgments of God, (*Job* i. 21. and ii. 10.) he endured a complication of the heaviest calamities, which Providence brought upon him for the trial and exemplary proof of his integrity; and ye must needs have known what a gracious and happy issue the Lord gave unto them all, in not only delivering him out of them, but also in manifesting himself to him in an extraordinary manner, with high testimonies of his approbation of him, and in restoring to him, with rich advantage, double of all that he had lost. (*Chap.* xlii.) Ye hereby evidently see that the Lord is (πολυσπλαγχνος) a God of infinitely abounding compassion, and is (οικτιρμων) propense, like one whose bowels of love and pity are moved within him, to shew the tenderest mercy to them that fear him, in upholding them under, and carrying them through, and giving them blessed fruits of, all their trials and afflictions.

12 But above all things, my brethren, swear not, neither by heaven, neither by the earth, neither by any other oath: but let your yea, be yea; and *your* nay, nay; lest ye fall into condemnation.

12 But there is one flagrant sin, my dear brethren, which the infidel *Jews* are abominably addicted to, and I would in a special manner, and above all others that men are apt to fall into, through an impatient temper, warn you against, as exceeding affrontive, dishonourable and provoking to the great God, and as every way unprofitable in itself, and utterly inconsistent with the Christian character. What I mean is, that ye would never dare to go into rash and impious cursing * and swearing in a passion, or in common conversation, by putting an oath before all that ye say. Let no provocation cause you to swear profanely; nor let any oath be ever used unnecessarily, at all, either by heaven, which is

NOTE.

* The words, rendered *above all things* (προ παντων) literally signify *before* all; and may refer to the profane custom of prefixing an oath, in common conversation, to all that is affirmed, or denied.

is God's throne, or by the earth, which is his footſtool; (*Matth.* v. 34. 35.) * or by any other oath, which, whatever be pretended, is, in effect, ſwearing by the Creator of all things, whether his name be expreſsly mentioned or not. But let your converſation be ſo evidently diſpaſſionate, honeſt, and upright, that a plain affirmation or denial, ſuch as a bare *yes*, or *no*, may be ſufficient to gain an entire credit to what ye ſay, leſt ye fall under the condemnation of ſuch as *take God's name in vain*; (Exod. xx. 7.) or of being either falſe-hearted profeſſors, on one hand, or downright infidels, on the other.

13 Is any among you afflicted? let him pray. Is any merry? let him ſing pſalms.

13 As to your deportment in adverſity and proſperity, if any of you be in afflicted circumſtances, which is often the lot of God's own people, let him betake himſelf to ſolemn and fervent prayer for relief: If, on the contrary, any of you be ſurrounded with the bleſſings of providence and grace, to the joy of his heart, let him give a ſacred vent to his grateful ſentiments, in chearful thankſgivings and praiſes to the God of all his mercies, which may be very ſuitably expreſſed, by ſinging forth the honours of his gracious name in pſalms and ſpiritual ſongs. Theſe duties, which are indeed to have their turns through our whole lives, are eſpecially ſeaſonable in thoſe reſpective ſituations.

14 Is any ſick among you? let him call for the elders of the church; and let them pray over him, anointing him with oil, in the name of the Lord:

14 If there be any one among you that labours under a bodily diſtemper, which is ſuppoſed to be inflicted upon him for ſome remarkable ſin, (*ver.* 15. compared with 1 *Cor.* xi. 30. ſee the note there) let him deſire the officers of the church, and eſpecially ſuch of them as are endued with miraculous gifts, to come together; and let them pray with, or over him ſuitable to his caſe, and lay their hands upon him; (*Mark* xvi. 18.) and, as a ſign of healing virtue, anoint him with oil in the name, and by the authority of the Lord Jeſus, according to his appointment, (*Mark* vi. 13. ſee the note there) calling upon him to exert his divine power for anſwering the ſignal by an effectual cure †.

15 And

NOTES.

* The *Jews* of this age were notoriouſly guilty of profane ſwearing, though not always by explicitly mentioning the name of *God*, yet by one or other of *his creatures*, which they did not reckon to be binding upon them; but which our Lord told them was, in effect, ſwearing by the God himſelf who made them. (See the note on *Matth* v 34.) And it ſeems to be with a ſpecial reference to theſe ſorts of oaths, as well as to all profane ſwearing in common converſation, that Chriſt there, and our apoſtle here, ſo earneſtly remonſtrates againſt them. But this is no argument againſt taking a ſolemn oath before a magiſtrate, or in a court of judicature, on important occaſions; provided it be only by the name of *God*, according to his command. (See *Deut.* vi. 13. and x. 20. and *Iſa.* lxv. 16. and the note on *Heb.* vi. 16.)

† *Anointing with oil* was an ordinance for the *miraculous* cure of ſick perſons. (*Mark* vi. 13.) But ſince thoſe extraordinary gifts are ceaſed, as being no longer neceſſary for the confirmation of

15 And the prayer of faith shall save the sick, and the Lord shall raise him up; and if he have committed sins, they shall be forgiven him.

15 And the prayer that is offered up by the elders and the sick person, (*Mark* v. 34. and x. 52. and *Acts* xiv. 9, 10.) with faith in the name of Christ, and with a particular extraordinary dependence on his power for a performance of what is humbly asked of him, shall be owned and succeeded in the Lord's delivering the patient from death, and recovering him to a state of health and strength: And if any particular sins have been the immediate occasion of his disease, they shall be forgiven him; in token, or, at least, as an emblem of which, the sickness shall be removed; and, through his own faith in the blood of Christ for the remission of them, they shall be pardoned as to the eternal, as well as temporal punishment, which they had deserved and exposed him to.

16 Confess *your* faults one to another, and pray one for another, that ye may be healed. The effectual fervent prayer of a righteous man availeth much.

16 As to your brotherly behaviour *in common*, be ready on all occasions to acknowledge any offences that ye have given one to another, according to our blessed Lord's own direction; (*Matth.* v. 23, 24. see the note there) or if there be any sins that lie upon your consciences, under a sense of their being the reason of God's contending with you in the way of his judgments, unbosom yourselves in free and humble confessions of them one to another, as Christian brethren, that ye may sympathize with, and know what to ask of God for each other by turns, as occasions require *; and according to the knowledge ye have of one another's afflicted circumstances, be earnest in mutual prayer for each other, that the distressed among you, whether in body or mind, or both, may be healed of all their maladies. (*Heb.* xii.

NOTES.

of the gospel, our faith, in the common course of things, has now no warrant for using that ceremony; much less doth what is here said about it give any countenance to the papists sacrament of *extreme unction*, which they administer, not with oil only, but with oil and spittle; and *that*, not for the *recovery of the sick*, but for a pretended *purgation from the sins* of those, that are in the very article of death, or past hope of recovery. (Vid. *Par.* in loc.)

* *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another*, seem evidently to relate to the duty that is to be reciprocally exercised between *private Christians*, in distinction from what was said, in the two preceding verses, about the prayer of those *elders*, as most immediately intended, who were endued with *miraculous gifts* of healing. For the apostle here speaks of believers in common, and of what they ought to do to, and for one another. (αλληλοις και υπερ αλληλων) And so here is no foundation for *auricular confession to a priest*; since what is here directed to, chiefly relates to offences which one had committed against another, and is so to be *mutual* and *reciprocal*, as the words import; and therefore, if it were to be understood of the *people* and the *priest*, it would oblige the priest to confess his faults to the people, as well as the people to the priest, which would scarcely go down with the popish advocates for this *priestly prerogative*; and surely it is as much the duty of the people to pray for their ministers, as of their ministers to pray for them; and the prayer which is said to *avail much*, is called the prayer, not of the *elders*, but of the *righteous man*, as such.

xii. 13. and 3 *John* ver. 2.) And, for your encouragement, remember that the fervent in-wrought prayer (ενεργουμενη) of a good and holy man, who is himself sanctified, and accepted of God in Christ as righteous, and so has an interest at the throne of grace; the prayer that is excited in him, and conducted and animated with a sacred warmth of soul, by the Spirit of grace and supplication to help his infirmities, (*Zech.* xii. 10. and *Rom.* viii. 26.) has a wonderful power with God, and prevails, as *Jacob*'s did, when he wrestled for, and obtained the blessing. (*Gen.* xxxii. 28.)

17 Elias was a man subject to like passions as we are, and he prayed earnestly that it might not rain: and it rained not on the earth by the space of three years and six months.

17 We have a memorable example of the great efficacy of believing and fervent prayer in the prophet *Elijah;* he was a frail mortal man, of like natural and sinful infirmities, and of like sufferings and passions with ourselves; and yet was remarkably heard and answered in the very things which he prayed for. At one time, he, not in an angry mood, or with a revengeful spirit, but with great engagedness of heart and believing importunity, begged of God that the bottles of heaven might be restrained, in a way of judgment for the rebuke and conviction of king *Ahab* and the *Israelites*, who were fallen into idolatry: (1 *Kings* xvi. 30,—33. compared with *chap.* xvii. 1.) And the Lord so fully answered his prayer, that the clouds of heaven were shut up; insomuch that no rain fell on the land of *Israel* for three years and a half together, by means of which great drought, a sore famine was brought upon the earth. (*Luke* iv. 25. see the note there.)

18 And he prayed again, and the heaven gave rain, and the earth brought forth her fruit.

18 After this, in mercy to the people that had been reclaimed from their idolatry, and in confirmation of their faith in the God of *Israel*, (1 Kings xviii. 39,—45.) *Elijah* offered up his earnest prayer again for the return of plentiful and seasonable showers; and it pleased God in a wonderful manner to answer him, by sending an exceeding great quantity of rain from the clouds of heaven to revive the face of the earth, which thereupon yielded its fruits with rich increase. And God is still, as much as ever, *a God who hears prayer*, and never said to the spiritual *seed of* Jacob *seek ye me in vain.* (Psal. lxv. 2. and *Isa.* xlv. 19.)

19 Brethren, if any of you do err from the truth, and one convert him;

19 To conclude this epistle, in which I have remonstrated against the sins that abound among the unbelieving *Jews*, and have been too prevalent in some of you, my brethren, who make a profession of Christ's name, whosoever he be among you, that through infidelity, or backsliding and apostacy, runs astray from Christ, and from the truth of the gospel,

in

in principle and practice, by errors in doctrine and immorality of life; and any one of you, in your respective stations, be instrumental in turning him from his erroneous notions, and from his iniquity to God;

20 Let him know, that he which converteth the sinner from the error of his way, shall save a soul from death, and shall hide a multitude of sins.

20 Let such an instrument of good consider the importance of this happy change; and when his endeavours are rendered effectual, by divine grace, to produce it, he ought to rejoice and bless God, in this reflection, that he who is so highly honoured, as to be the means of a sinner's conversion, or of a backslider's recovery from the erroneous thoughts, dispositions, and courses of his life, to God in Christ, will be the means of saving an immortal soul from spiritual death and eternal destruction; and of leading him into the way of life and peace, in which all his multiplied transgressions shall be covered from the eye of avenging justice, by the righteousness of the Redeemer, *which is unto, and upon all that believe, without difference;* (Rom. iii. 22.) and, by his conversion, many sins will be prevented, which otherwise would have been committed by him, and by others, through his bad example and influence, and would have appeared in open light at the day of judgment.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a snare are the riches of this world to a covetous and carnal mind! They are often got and misused with much guilt, and bring upon their owners the most distressing and aggravated sorrows. The cries of the injured and defrauded, and of the persecuted unto death, go up to the Lord of hosts, calling aloud for righteous vengeance to come down upon their oppressors and murderers; and what these spend in pomp and luxury, or unduely hoard up, will be a swift witness against them, and add to their stock of wrath against the day of wrath in the final judgment.—O what abundance of patience do the saints need in such a wicked and miserable world as this! But what encouragement have they to exercise it, since Christ will soon appear to reckon with all their enemies, and to deliver themselves out of all their troubles! They may learn the great lesson of patient waiting for the salvation of the Lord, from the husbandman, who waits with long patience for the harvest; from the ancient prophets, who, though dear to God, suffered many tribulations, and were patient under them; and from the eminent example of *Job*, who, though sorely afflicted for a while, calmly submitted to the divine will, and had wonderful experience, at last, of the tender mercy and compassion of God, which gloriously crowned all. How inconsistent is it with the Christian character to swear by God, or any of his creatures, or any petty oaths, in a passion, or in common conversation! And how becoming, to behave with such apparent integrity at all times, as shall engage a firm dependence on the truth of his bare affirmation, or denial! How prayerful should he be in affliction, and how full of praise in prosperity! And if the Lord, in the way of his righteous judgment, lay any disease upon him for some particular sins, he should desire the prayers of the officers and private members of the church, as the ordinary means, that God in the present state of things, in which miraculous gifts of healing are ceased, will own and bless for his recovery, whenever, upon the whole, it may be for the best: For the believing fervent prayer of a righteous man, that is animated by the Holy Spirit, has great power with God to obtain whatever is most for his glory and agreeable to his will. An eminent instance of this we have in the answers which were given to the prayers of *Elias*, a man of like human and sinful passions with ourselves, for shutting and opening the bottles of heaven. But how becoming is it for Christians,

in ſpecial caſes of offence given to their brethren, or of burden upon their ſpirits, or of divine rebuke, to make frank and open confeſſions of their faults to each other, that they may the better ſympathize with, and know how to order their prayers for one another! And ſince there are ſo great numbers of notorious ſinners and apoſtates that run aſtray in principle and practice from the truth and holineſs of the goſpel. How encouraging is it for miniſters and private Chriſtians too, to do what in them lies for their converſion; and what an honour and pleaſure to be inſtrumental thereunto! Since he who is the means of turning any tranſgreſſor from the evil of his ways to God, through Chriſt, contributes, in a ſubordinate manner, to the ſaving of an immortal ſoul from eternal miſery, and to the preventing of many ſins, and hiding others from the eye of God's avenging juſtice!

A PRAC-

A PRACTICAL

EXPOSITION

OF THE

FIRST GENERAL EPISTLE

OF THE

APOSTLE PETER,

IN THE FORM OF A

PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF PETER.

THE apoſtle *Peter*, as he himſelf tells us, was the penman of this, and the ſecond epiſtle that bear his name. And they are moſt probably ſuppoſed to have been wrote, the *firſt* either about the year of our Lord 65 or 66, and the *ſecond* a year or two afterwards; not long before the apoſtle's martyrdom at *Rome*. (See Dr. *Whitby*'s preface for confuting the popiſh pretence, as though the *firſt* were written about the year 44 or 45.)

The inſcription of this epiſtle directs it to *the ſtrangers ſcattered throughout* Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Aſia, *and* Bithynia, which ſeems to be much of the ſame import with the inſcription of the apoſtle *James*'s general epiſtle to *the twelve tribes*, *which were ſcattered abroad*, though the tribes of *Iſrael* are not expreſſed in this inſcription, as they are in that.

However, the introduction to Mr. *Peirce*'s paraphraſe and notes on the the epiſtle to the *Hebrews*, and Dr. *Benſon*'s hiſtory of St. *Peter*, &c. would maintain that *both* the epiſtles of *Peter* were wrote rather to the *Gentile* than *Jewiſh* Chriſtians, who were ſcattered in the various provinces above mentioned. But as all their reaſonings and criticiſms are, in my account, far from being concluſive; and as canvaſſing them might not be much to the edification of the common Chriſtian, for whoſe uſe my paraphraſe and notes are moſt immediately intended, I ſhall not trouble him with them; and, perhaps, they may in good meaſure be anſwered, by only ſuppoſing, (as I think we naturally may) that the apoſtle *principally* deſigned ſuch *Jewiſh* converts, as were ſcattered thoughout thoſe countries, though not to the excluſion of ſuch *Gentile* believers, as were mingled with them; in like manner as the apoſtle *Paul* wrote to the *Gentile* Chriſtians, though not to the excluſion of *Jewiſh* believers, in moſt of his epiſtles to particular churches.

Several

Several considerations incline me to think, that our apostle had chiefly a respect to *Jewish* converts in both his epistles: For *Peter* was, in a peculiar manner, the apostle of the *circumcision;* and therefore it seems highly improbable, and out of character, to suppose that the *only epistles* he wrote were to *Gentile*, and not *Jewish* converts; and our thoughts are led to these by several hints in the epistles themselves. He considers them as persons who were redeemed from their vain conversation, *received by tradition from their fathers*, (chap. i. 18.) which the *Jews* had been most notoriously and criminally fond of. (See *Mat.* xv. 2, 3 *Mark* vii. 3, 8, 9. and *Gal.* i. 14.) The apostle also speaks of *believing women*, as the daughters of *Sarah;* (chap. iii. 6.) which could not be said with just propriety of any but her descendents; since *the covenant*, by which *Gentile* believers come to be the children of *Abraham*, was made immediately and expressly with *him*, and not with *Sarah* his wife: The apostle's discourse about political and relative duties, in the second and third chapters, seem to have been occasioned by *Jewish* prejudices against being subject to *heathen* magistrates and masters: His *beseeching them to have their conversation honest among the* Gentiles, (*chap.* ii. 11, 12.) carries an intimation of their being a distinct people from them; the *judgment* which should *begin at the house of God*, and was just then at hand, (*chap.* iv. 17.) evidently relates to the destruction of the *Jews* and their temple, which most nearly concerned those of that nation. And in his *second* epistle he speaks of *always putting them in remembrance, as long as he was in this tabernacle, and of endeavouring that they might always have them in remembrance after his decease;* (chap. i. 12,—15.) which may point us to his ordinary personal ministrations, as well as to his writing these epistles, and best agrees to his office, character, and work, as the apostle of *the circumcision*. And his *stirring up their pure minds, by way of remembrance, that they might be mindful of the words which were spoken before by the holy prophets*, (chap. iii. 1, 2.) intimates, that they had been before conversant with those words. It may also be very likely, that what he mentions of his *beloved brother* Paul's *having written to them*, (ver. 15.) refers to his epistle to the *Hebrews*.

Upon the whole then, as I apprehend, we may abide by the common opinion that *both* these epistles were written *mostly*, at least, for the use of *Jewish* professing believers in Christ, who were dispersed through the several places above mentioned in the inscription of the *first* of them.

The design of the apostle in this *first epistle* was to establish those converts in the faith of Christ, as their foundation; and to comfort them under severe persecutions; (*chap.* i. and ii. 1,—8. to engage them to an honourable conscientious and winning behaviour among the *Gentiles*, and particularly to a faithful discharge of all the duties of their civil and family relations; (*chap.* ii. 9. *ad fin.* and iii. 1,—7.) and to an exercise of all the duties of brotherly love among themselves, and of their respective stations in the church; concluding with a prayer, that the God of all grace would, in and after all their terrible sufferings, strengthen and settle them in their faith and hope; and

and that they all might have peace in Christ Jesus. (*Chap.* iii. 8. to the end of the epistle.)

CHAP. I.

The apostle salutes the professing believers, to whom he wrote; and blesses God for his special benefits to them through Jesus Christ, in which they rejoiced under all tribulations, 1,—9. *shews that salvation by Christ was foretold in ancient prophecy*, 10,—12. *and exhorts them to all holy conversation, suitable to their principles, privileges, and obligations*, 13,—25.

TEXT.

PETER an apostle of Jesus Christ, to the strangers scattered throughout Pontus, Galatia, Cappadocia, Asia, and Bithynia,

2 Elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father, thro' sanctification of the Spirit unto obedience, and sprinkling of the blood of Jesus Christ. Grace unto you, and peace be multiplied.

PARAPHRASE.

PETER, who, by the immediate appointment and commission of the Lord Jesus Christ, was constituted an apostle principally of the circumcision, (*Gal.* ii. 8.) sends this epistle, under divine inspiration, chiefly to the professing Christians of *Jewish* extract, who are, not only in a metaphorical sense, but, *properly speaking*, strangers in foreign countries; as being expelled from their own land, and dispersed, by the providence of God, in the various *Gentile* contiguous provinces of *Pontus*, *Galatia*, *Cappadocia*, the proconsular *Asia*, and *Bithynia*.*

2 Who, notwithstanding their former revolt as a nation from the God of *Israel*, and from his covenant made with their fathers, appear, in the judgment of charity, by the tokens of his grace upon them in their effectual calling, to be the objects of his special and eternal choice, according to the kind distinguishing notice, which God the Father took of them before all worlds, (see the note on *Rom.* viii. 29.) with a gracious design of bringing them to eternal life, through the renewing and purifying operations of his Spirit on their souls, to engage and enable them

NOTE.

* All these countries, as the best geographers think, lay in what was called the Lesser *Asia*, which was contained in, and spoken of by way of distinction from the large continent that bore the name of *Asia*, in the three grand divisions of the then known world, *America* having been discovered in latter ages; and therefore the *Asia* here meant and distinguished from *Pontus*, *Galatia*, &c. must be that which was sometimes called the *Roman* proconsular *Asia*, and at others, *Asia* proper. And the *strangers scattered abroad throughout* these provinces seem to be meant of those of the tribes of *Israel* that did not return from the captivity to their own land, but sojourned in those countries, rather than of those that were dispersed by the persecution spoken of in *Acts* viii. 1. For these were scattered only throughout *Judea* and *Samaria*, though afterwards some of them travelled as far as *Phenice*, and *Cyprus*, and *Antioch*, preaching the word to none but unto the *Jews* only, *Acts* xi. 19. But all these countries were far distant from those into which these strangers are said to have been scattered. (Consult *Wells*'s geography of the New Testament.)

them to yield themselves up unto all holy obedience to his commandments in heart and life; (*Eph.* i. 4. see the paraphrase and notes there) and to bring them under an application of the atoning blood of Christ, for the remission of their sins, which was typified by the sprinkling of the blood of sacrifices under the law, and, in that allusion, is fitly called *the blood of sprinkling*. (Heb. xii. 24.) May the free favour of God, with all its genuine fruits and effects, in their utmost variety, manifestations, and fulness; and all prosperity, spiritual and temporal, as consisting of peace with God, and peace in your own consciences, and with one another, and all around you, and every other comfortable circumstance, be abundantly increased towards, and in you!

3 Blessed *be* the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, which according to his abundant mercy hath begotten us again unto a lively hope, by the resurrection of Jesus Christ from the dead,

3 When I reflect on the great and blessed things which God has already done for us, whom he has chosen, redeemed, and called, my heart is filled with gratitude, joy, and praise; and ye ought to join with me in chearful ascriptions of all possible glory and thanksgivings to God, even the Father, who with respect to *the human nature* of Christ is *his God;* and and with respect to *his divine nature* is, in a way of peculiarity and eminence, *his Father;* and with respect to his *office capacity* is *the covenant-God and Father* of our Lord Jesus Christ, whom he has raised up and anointed to be the Prophet, Priest, and King, and so the complete and only Saviour, of every one of us who truly believe in him. Adored and for ever magnified be his glorious name, who, not according to our deserts, but according to the wonderful riches and multitude of his free and sovereign mercy, in which he chose us, has now begotten us anew by his regenerating spirit, to a joyful hope, which springs from a lively faith, and revives the heart, has spiritual life and vigour in it, and has for its object a resurrection to eternal life, and shall certainly issue in it, through the quickening power and virtue of the resurrection of Jesus Christ, and through faith in him, who, by his sufferings unto death, has satisfied divine justice for our sins, and by his rising again from the dead for our justification, is publicly owned and acquitted by God the Father, *that our faith and hope might be in God* through him. (ver. 21.)

4 To an inheritance incorruptible, and undefiled, and that fadeth not away, reserved in heaven for you.

4 Blessed be his name who has given us a new and spiritual birth, whereby we are rendered capable of, and fitted for, as well as intitled by gracious adoption to, a noble inheritance, as the portion, answerable to the dignity of his sons: (*Rom.* viii. 17.) An inheritance, not of a perishing nature, as all the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world are; nor an earthly inheritance

inheritance, like that of the land of *Canaan*, from which the *Jews* of the dispersion are driven away; but an inheritance, which will make a rich amends for the loss of *that*, and of all temporal possessions: An everlasting immortal inheritance, altogether pure and holy, incapable of being itself defiled, or being enjoyed by polluted souls, or of defiling any that are partakers of it: And never decaying in its worth, sweetness, or beauty; but always fresh, entertaining, and delightful; a glorious inheritance, consisting of the sublimest and most refined enjoyments which never fade, like the garlands of herbs and flowers with which conquerors used to be crowned; and is an inheritance securely laid up, and kept safe in heaven, by the immutable purpose and promise of God, and by the meritorious and efficacious mediation of Christ, as a precious inexhaustible treasure for all and every one of you that are begotten to it.

5 Who are kept by the power of God through faith unto salvation, ready to be revealed in the last time.

5 Who, though weak in yourselves, and exposed to innumerable temptations and dangers which would be too hard for you, were you left to your own wisdom and strength to combat with them, are guarded and preserved as in a garrison, (φρουρουμενους) by the almighty power of the great God himself, which is engaged for your preservation and safety against all your enemies, through a daily exercise of faith in its dependence on Christ, and realizing views of future glory, to animate you in your Christian course of obedience, and make you victorious over sin, Satan, and the world, (*Eph.* vi. 16. and 1 *John* iii. 9. and v. 4.) till ye arrive at complete salvation; which salvation is already *prepared for you*, in the design of God, *from the foundation of the world*, (Matth. xxv. 34.) and by the purchase and advocacy of Christ, who, as your head and forerunner, has taken possession of it for you; and which will soon be manifested in all its riches and delights, when he shall appear to judge the world, at the last day, and *ye shall appear with him in glory*: (Col. iii. 3, 4.) And so ye are as safely kept for this inheritance, as the inheritance itself is for you.

6 Wherein ye greatly rejoice, though now for a season (if need be) ye are in heaviness through manifold temptations:

6 In the believing view and hope of all this, ye well may, as I trust ye do, exceedingly rejoice, (as ye shall still more abundantly hereafter) even to an exultation, though at present, in this imperfect state of weakness, sin, and sorrow, ye for a little while (if God sees it needful for his glory and your own good) are grievously, and yet comparatively speaking, but *lightly*, afflicted, through a great variety of trials from Satan and the world, and from your own infirmities and frailties, which ye are now attended with, and are permitted to be so:

7 That the trial of your faith being much more precious than of gold that perisheth, tho' it be tried with fire, might be found unto praise, and honour, and glory at the appearing of Jesus Christ;

7 To the end that (ινα) the experiment and proof (δοκιμιον, see the note on *Jam.* i. 3.) of your genuine faith in Christ, which is abundantly more to its advantage and honour, than the trial of gold can be to it, as *this*, how much soever it be refined from its dross by the fire, is of a perishing nature still, and may be worn away by use, and lose some of its particles in the very trial of it; Whereas true faith is improved and increased, and made to shine the brighter, by the blessing of God upon its trials, that it may evidently discover itself with such purity and eminence, as shall be to its highest commendation, and shall be openly approved of God, and graciously rewarded with honour and glory, as its fruit and consequence; and as shall ultimately redound to his most glorious praise; when Jesus Christ, *the author and finisher of your faith*, (Heb. xii. 2.) shall be revealed to crown his own work in you, at his second appearing to your complete salvation: And then it shall be found, that *these light afflictions, which are but for a moment, work for you a far more exceeding and eternal weight of glory.* (2 Cor. iv. 17.)

8 Whom having not seen, ye love; in whom, though now ye see *him* not, yet believing, ye rejoice with joy unspeakable, and full of glory:

8 Though ye, who are far distant from *Judea*, never saw Christ with your bodily eyes; yet through the revelation which has been made of him to, and in your souls, by his word and Spirit, ye have a sincere desire after him, affection to him, esteem of him, and delight in him; in whom, though at present he be out of the reach of your corporal sight, and ye neither see him, as many did in the days of his flesh on earth, and as ye yourselves will in his state of exaltation hereafter; yet while ye realize and appropriate him by faith, and trust in him as your only Saviour, ye rejoice in him, and in hope of his glory, even unto a rapture and triumph, with a joy so sublime, heavenly, and satisfying, as surpasses the powers of language to express; a joy which is glorious in itself, and attended with all glorying in him; and is indeed a lively foretaste and earnest of the glory, with which ye shall hereafter be glorified with him. (αγαλλιασθε χαρα ανεκλαλητω και δεδοξασμενη.)

9 Receiving the end of your faith, *even* the salvation of *your* souls.

9 When ye, like conquerors in the public games, shall receive as a reward of grace, (τελος) the perfection and ultimate aim of your faith, and the end which it terminates and issues in, even the complete deliverance of your souls, which are the principal part of the man, and the salvation of which will draw after it *that* of your bodies too, from all sin, want, and misery; and the advancement of your whole persons to all the felicity and glory of the heavenly state.

10 Which

10 Of which salvation the prophets have enquired, and searched diligently, who prophesied of the grace *that should come* unto you:

10 Which glorious and blessed salvation, as to be brought about, and clearly revealed in the Messiah's days, was foretold by the ancient inspired prophets, who were earnestly inquisitive, and exceeding diligent, like miners digging for precious ore, (ἐξηρεύνησαν) in their searches after the meaning of their own prophecies, when they spoke many ages ago, concerning the rich and eminent blessings of light and grace, pardon, purity and peace, hope and joy, which ye should be partakers of, with clear evidence of your own interest in them.

11 Searching what, or what manner of time, the Spirit of Christ which was in them did signify, when it testified beforehand the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow.

11 They being very solicitous, as *Daniel* was, by studying the sacred writings, (*Dan.* ix. 2.) to find out, to what purpose, and with a reference to what period of time, and what should be the particular signs, by which it might be known, as also whether it should be in days of preceding purity or vice, light or darkness, or of outward peace or trouble to the church, that the things should come to pass, which the Spirit of Christ *, whom he imparted to them, and who guided and acted in them, intimated, when he bore witness, long before-hand in their prophecies, to the things that related to the extremely painful and abasing sufferings of the Messiah, in soul and body, unto death, by which he should be cut off for the transgressions of his people, and make reconciliation for their iniquities; (*Isa.* liii. 8. and *Dan.* ix. 24, 26.) and that related to the glories (δοξας) of his resurrection, ascension, and exaltation, and the effusion of his Spirit; and to the glory of the gospel-state, and, at length, of all his members with him, and in conformity to him, which should be the effect and consequence of his atoning sacrifice, and should abide for ever afterwards.

12 Unto whom it was revealed, that not unto themselves, but unto us they did minister the things which are now reported

12 Unto which holy prophets, it was made known, by the suggestion of the Spirit, that their predictions were not to be fulfilled in their days, but in after-times; and that, though their own souls were refreshed, and their faith, together with the faith of the godly in those ages, was supported by them; yet that they did not therein

NOTE.

* *The Spirit of Christ's testifying the sufferings of Christ, and the glory that should follow*, and *his revealing* to the prophets, that the testimony related to future ages, were the actions of a *divine person*, distinct from him, whose spirit he is, and whose sufferings and glory he testified; and his being called *the Spirit of Christ*, when he *beforehand* gave this testimony, shews that he as really existed, and was *the Spirit of Christ* then, as when Christ after his ascension sent him, (*John* xvi. 7.) and the Father sent him in his name; (*chap.* xiv. 26.) and that therefore he was properly *the Spirit of Christ*, or *of the Son*, (Gal. iv. 6.) as well as of the Father, prior to, and independent of their sending him, in consequence of Christ's sufferings and exaltation, and not merely on account of that mission.

ported unto you by them that have preached the gospel unto you, with the Holy Ghost sent down from heaven; which things the angels desire to look into.

therein so much serve themselves, or the then present generation, as they did us, who live under the New Testament-dispensation, and are favoured with its important blessings; which are now openly proclaimed, and faithfully declared to you, in the glad tidings of salvation, by them who have published the gospel of the grace of God to you in all its light, liberty, and glory; which has been divinely confirmed by the attending testimony and communication of the Holy Spirit, in his gifts and graces, as sent down from the exalted Saviour in heaven, according to his promise; (*John* xiv. 26. and xv. 26. and xvi. 7. and *Acts* chap. ii.) which gospel unfolds things so excellent, profound and entertaining, that the holy angels themselves, those bright and happy intelligences, are exceeding desirous, like students greedy of further improvement in the best of all knowledge, to make critical and close enquiries into the manifold wisdom of God that is displayed in them; which was emblematically represented by the cherubim that were placed over the ark and mercy-seat (*Exod.* xxv. 20.) in a stooping posture, (παρακυψαι) as though they would accurately pry into the things which were contained therein, and signified thereby. (See the note on *Heb.* ix. 5.)

13 Wherefore gird up the loins of your mind, be sober, and hope to the end, for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ;

13 Having therefore these revelations and encouragements, with respect to future and eternal blessedness, take heed of waxing weary and faint in your minds; but as persons are wont to gird up the long garments, which are worn in Eastern countries, about their loins, to strengthen them for service, and prevent entanglements or incumbrances, in travelling, running, fighting, or any other exercises; and as the *Israelites* were to have their loins girded at the passover, when they were setting out from Egypt for the land of *Canaan*; (Exod. xii. 11.) so let it be your continual endeavour, by divine assistance, to gather your loose thoughts and affections together; to get rid of the cares and incumbrances of this life; to moderate your appetites to, and make a temperate use of, the things of this world, with holy vigilance, (νηφοντες) like servants that wait for the coming of their lord. (*Luke* xii. 35,—37.) And be careful to maintain a sincere, unshaken, growing, and persevering trust and hope in Christ, (τελειως ελπισατε) to the end of your days, temptations, and conflicts, with joyful confidence and assured expectation of all the bliss and glory of the heavenly state, which is merely the gift of God's free favour, (*Rom.* vi. 23.) and is the perfection of the begun work of grace in you here; and which shall be brought into your complete and actual possession, when the Lord Jesus *shall be revealed from heaven with*

with his mighty angels; and shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe. (2 Thess. i. 7, 10.)

14 As obedient children, not fashioning yourselves according to the former lusts, in your ignorance:

14 Behave then suitable to your spiritual, high and noble birth, privileges and hopes, as dutiful children, entirely subject to the authority and commandments, and submissive to the will of your heavenly Father in all things: And take heed of falling in with, (μη συσχηματιζομενοι) or being conformed to the corrupt inclinations and desires, schemes, principles, practices, language, and fashions of the men of this world, and particularly of this degenerate age, as formerly, while ye were strangers to Christ and the gospel, and were involved in darkness and error, under the power and dominion of *fleshly lusts, which war against the soul:* (chap. ii. 11.)

15 But as he which hath called you is holy, so be ye holy in all manner of conversation;

15 But as God is essentially and perfectly holy, who has called you by his grace to the faith and fellowship of his Son Jesus Christ, that ye might be a holy people to him; so ye ought, as far as possible, to imitate and resemble him in the purity and sanctity of your hearts, and of your whole lives and conversation, at all times, in every circumstance of prosperity and adversity, and in every relation in which ye stand toward God and one another, and towards all men, whether friends or enemies, saints or sinners. This ye are obliged unto by a divine command;

16 Because it is written, Be ye holy, for I am holy.

16 Because God says now to you, as he often did to his ancient covenant-people the *Jews*, as recorded in the writings of the Old Testament, (*Lev.* xi. 44. and xix. 2. and xx. 26.) I demand that ye be a holy people unto me, after my own heart and likeness; for I the Lord your God and Father, am a holy God, *of purer eyes than to behold iniquity* without the utmost detestation of it. (*Habak.* i. 13.)

17 And if ye call on the Father, who without respect of persons judgeth according to every man's work, pass the time of your sojourning here in fear:

17 And if, answerable to your holy profession, ye from your very hearts call God your Father in Christ, and invoke him in his name, and pay all religious homage to him, who without any partial respect of persons, on account of their earthly ancestors, or external relations and privileges, judges concerning them, and passes sentence upon them in his word, and will do so *in righteousness by Jesus Christ* at the last day, (*Acts* xvii. 31. and *Rom.* ii. 16.) according to what every one's works now are, and shall then be found to be, whether good or evil, in proof of their being his *obedient children*, (ver. 14.) or not. These solemn considerations of God should excite and engage you to an humble and awful reverence of him, and fear of offending him; together with a godly jealousy over your own hearts, and fear of being left to yourselves, for the

the little time that ye may be here in a state of pilgrimage, passing on through this world, as strangers upon earth, to your own better country and inheritance in heaven, to which ye are begotten, (*ver.* 3, 4.) and which God has prepared for you. (*Heb.* xi. 9, 10, 13, 16.)

18 Forasmuch as ye know that ye were not redeemed with corruptible things, *as* silver and gold, from your vain conversation *received* by tradition from your fathers;

18 And ye ought to be the more strongly induced, and encouraged to go on in this holy conversation and religious fear, since ye, as true believers, must needs be assured that your redemption and recovery from all the corrupt, empty, defiling, and destructive manners and customs, which in the days of your sin and folly ye were brought up in, and went into, as handed down from age to age by the traditions of your rabbies and ancestors, and as taught and practised by your immediate fathers after the flesh; ye, I say, cannot be ignorant that your deliverance from all this, and from its dreadful consequences, was not purchased by so mean a price as the perishing riches of this world, such as the silver and gold which are paid for buying poor captives out of bondage, misery, and slavery among men:

19 But with the precious blood of Christ, as of a lamb without blemish, and without spot:

19 But ye know that it was by no less a price, than the noble and unvaluably precious blood, sufferings, and death of the Son of God, as the anointed Saviour, who, *through the eternal Spirit offered himself without spot unto God*, (Heb. ix. 14.) as an atoning sacrifice of a sweet-smelling savour, (*Eph.* v. 2.) perfectly holy, and free from all original or actual defilement, flaw or defect, as was typified by the paschal lamb, and the lambs which were offered as daily sacrifices every morning and evening, under the law, and were to be without any kind of blemish, (*Ex.* xii. 5. and *Num.* xxviii. 3, 4, 9.) that they might the better prefigure this immaculate and eminent Lamb of God:

20 Who verily was fore-ordained before the foundation of the world, but was manifest in these last times for you;

20 Who was most certainly intended to be the only true propitiatory sacrifice, long before those legal shadows of him were instituted; yea, who was originally appointed of God hereunto in his eternal decree, before the foundation of the earth was laid; but it was in the fulness of time, that he was sent into our nature and world, (*Gal.* iv. 4.) and so was manifested in the flesh, to redeem them that were under the law; and in these concluding days of the *Jewish* age, and in the beginning of this last dispensation of God's grace to the church, he was clearly made known, and demonstrated to be the great and only Redeemer of lost sinners, which he really is, and is now openly declared to be, for your eternal salvation;

21 Who

21 Who by him do believe in God, that raised him up from the dead, and gave him glory, that your faith and hope might be in God.

21 Who through him, as the only Mediator, trust and hope in God, as a reconciled God and Father, who, in testimony of his being thoroughly appeased by the blood of Christ, raised up his crucified body from the grave, and exalted him in human nature to the highest honour, authority, and dominion, at his own right hand, that ye, encouraged by this unquestionable evidence of his being the true and accepted Messiah, and of his having finished the work which his Father gave him to do upon earth, might place your entire dependence and confidence in God through him, for all the blessings ye need here, and for a resurrection to eternal life and glory hereafter; ye therein relying upon God, as a God of peace and Father of mercies to you on his account.

22 Seeing ye have purified your souls in obeying the truth through the Spirit, unto unfeigned love of the brethren; *see that ye* love one another with a pure heart fervently:

22 Since ye have been enabled to mortify and subdue the power of those corruptions which formerly defiled your souls, and to become holy in heart and life, (*ver.* 14, 15.) by the obedience of faith, according to the command of God, and the truth of the gospel, (see *Rom.* xvi. 25, 26. and 1 *John* iii. 23.) through the powerful operation of the divine Spirit, who has wrought this holy and happy change in you; and since, being thus *sanctified through the truth*, (John xvii. 17.) ye are brought to a sincere, undissembled and hearty affection to your Christian brethren, as such, let it be your daily conscientious care to cultivate this brotherly love, yet more and more, towards one another, not merely in word, but in truth, with all its substantial fruits and genuine effects, and with the intense fervour of a heart purified by faith, and by regenerating grace:

23 Being born again, not of corruptible seed, but of incorruptible, by the word of God which liveth and abideth for ever.

23 Ye being, as I trust, really partakers of a new and spiritual birth, which doth not proceed from mortal seed, like your natural birth, nor from a corrupt principle, which produces only corruptible effects, like what the carnal *Jews* received, with all its external privileges, by descent, as the natural seed of *Abraham;* but is a supernatural, spiritual, and immortal birth; ye being begotten by means of the Word of Truth, (*Jam.* i. 18.) which is uncorruptible in itself, and in its vital production, and which, under the influence of the Divine Spirit, is of quickening efficacy, and, like its author, remains unchangeably the same in its own nature, and in its immortal virtue for ever; and so brings forth a nobler birth than can be derived from the most famous ancestors upon earth.

24 For all flesh is as grass, and all the glory of man as

24 For all fleshly descent, with its fairest fruits, may properly be compared to the green grass or herb of the field; (*Isa.* xl. 6, 7.) and all the natural and acquired

as the flower of grass. The grass withereth, and the flower thereof falleth away:

acquired endowments of man, as man, and external privileges of any man, in his present state of degeneracy, and all the ornaments of nature and art, as well as the honours of pedigree, which carnal minds pride themselves in, and the *Jews* boast of in their relation to *Abraham:* All this may be likened to the gay and beautiful flower which the grass bears in its verdure; it all soon fades and dies away, like blighted and withering grass, together with its most showy and admired adornings, that sicken and drop off, like the flowers of the field, when the wind passes over it, and it is gone. (*Ps.* ciii. 15, 16.)

25 But the word of the Lord endureth for ever. And this is the word which by the gospel is preached unto you.

25 But so incomparably more excellent is the word of the Lord, (*Isa.* xl. 8.) and the spiritual birth produced by it, that it always abides the same in its own nature and effects, as *the seed* which *remains*, in true believers; (1 *John* iii. 9.) and is ever living and enlivening without decay of its virtue, and will be effectual to make them happy for ever. And this is no other than that divinely inspired word, which contains the glad tidings of salvation by Jesus Christ, and is communicated to you in the promulgation of the gospel by his ministring servants, and rendered efficacious in the renovation of the whole man, by the blessed Spirit, unto eternal life.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a beautiful and harmonious concurrence is there in the election of the Father, the redemption of the Son, and the sanctification of the Spirit, for producing faith and holy obedience here, in order to complete salvation hereafter! Blessed be God, that wherever his grace takes effect upon any of us, we are new born to a happy and glorious immortality; and our souls are purified by the obedience of faith, unto a sincere love of the brethren, through the Spirit, by means of the gospel, which has a quickening virtue, and ever lives in its efficacy to maintain the principle of spiritual life, till it be perfected in life eternal: We are therein begotten as the children of God, according to his rich and abounding mercy, to a living hope of heaven, through the resurrection of Christ from the dead, and to an enjoyment, in due time, of that glorious inheritance, which is incorruptible, free from all impurity, and eternally abiding and entertaining, without decay: And as this is made ready and reserved in heaven for us; so we are safely kept by the power of God, through faith, to that salvation, which shall be revealed in all its fulness, grace, and glory at the last day, for which we believe in an unseen Jesus. O delightful prospect and security to all that are born of God! How transcendent to the perishing honours and advantages of this life, which fade and die, like the grass and flower of the field! With what transport may their faith triumph in Christ amidst all the various momentary afflictions, which God sees to be needful for them, that their faith being exercised, proved, and improved by means of those fiery trials, to better purpose than gold tried in the fire, may shine with the brighter honour and glory at the final appearing of Jesus Christ!—What a solid foundation for our faith have we in him, who was appointed of God from all eternity to be his salvation; was foretold by the ancient prophets; and is now more clearly reavealed in the gospel! He came in the fulness of time to redeem his people from all the sin and ruin of the fall, and of traditional corruptions, not with silver and gold, but with his own precious blood, as of a lamb without blemish; and his Father raised him from the dead, and exalted him in our nature to the highest authority and dignity, that our faith and hope might be emboldened to fix on God, as our reconciled God and Father through him. How surprising and important

portant are these things! The holy angels closely study them; and we ought to do so too, as being more nearly concerned in them.——How affectionately should we love the once suffering and now exalted Saviour, and all our Christian brethren for his sake! How holy ought we to be in obedience to the commands, and in imitation of our heavenly Father, who, as an impartial judge, has no respect of persons, but will pass a final sentence of happiness, or misery, by Jesus Christ, upon the whole world, according to the different kinds and degrees of their works! With what godly fear should we reverence him all the days of our lives! And how should we behave with vigilance and sobriety as pilgrims and strangers, who no longer fall in with the corrupt manners of this world, as in the time of our unregeneracy; but travel through it to our heavenly home, and maintain a stedfast hope to the end of life, that he, who has begun the good work in us, will finish it in eternal glory! May grace and peace be abundantly multiplied to all such!

CHAP. II.

The apostle recommends a temper suitable to their character, as born again, and a daily recourse to Christ as their only foundation, 1, —10. *Directs their holy conversation among the* Gentiles, 11, 12. *Exhorts subjects and servants to pay all proper obedience to their civil governors and masters,* 13,—18. *And to be patient, in imitation of their suffering Saviour, under all hardships that might be wrongfully laid upon them,* 19,—25.

TEXT.

WHerefore, laying aside all malice, and all guile, and hypocrisies, and envies, and all evil-speakings,

PARAPHRASE.

SINCE therefore ye are partakers of a new and spiritual birth, whereby ye are formed for purity and brotherly love, (*chap.* i. 22, 23.) ye ought to put off, cast away, and utterly abhor (as ye would old rotten and filthy garments that are unfit to be worn) all manner of wickedness or naughtiness, (πασαν κακιαν, see *Jam.* i. 21.) and particularly all malicious, spiteful and revengeful heart-burnings, designs and practices against your fellow-Christians, or any one whatsoever; together with all frauds, deceitful flatteries, and insincere compliments; and all hypocritical professions of religion toward God, and of respect, love, and friendship to others; as also all envious grudging and repining at their prosperity; and all backbitings, defamations, and detracting words, which proceed either from a guileful, or malicious, or envious disposition of the heart.

2 As new-born babes, desire the sincere milk of the word, that ye may grow thereby:

2 And as all these defiling and pernicious evils are to be entirely abandoned; so, as new-born infants long after the mother's milk, ye, under a feeling sense of your wants, ought to have eager appetites for, and earnest desires after the pure, uncorrupted word of God, (λογικον αδολον) as containing proper food and nourishment for rational and immortal souls, that ye may grow in knowledge and grace, comfort and, holiness, and in all spiritual strength and stature unto a

perfect man in Christ, (*Eph.* iv. 13.) by means of that very word of the gospel, by which ye were regenerated, and *which lives and abides for ever.* (Chap. i. 23.)

3 If so be ye have tasted that the Lord *is* gracious:

3 Ye not only ought to have, but ye certainly will have an utter aversion to all sin, and an appetite to the good word of God, (*ver.* 1, 2.) in case ye have really had, as I hope, an experimental acquaintance with, and a true relish and favour of, the mercy and grace of the Lord Jesus to your own souls, though it be but as a taste, in comparison with what ye shall hereafter enjoy in, and from him.

4 To whom coming, *as unto* a living stone, disallowed indeed of men, but chosen of God, *and* precious,

4 To whom ye are to be daily applying by faith for all further edification, support, and establishment, as unto the only foundation of all your security, hope, and happiness; which, in allusion to the foundation of the temple, in which the *Jews* glory, may be compared, not only to a *stone* for solidity and strength, firmness and duration; but, by way of eminence, to *a living stone,** as he has life in himself, and communicates quickening influence, and ever lives to animate all that are united to him, and built upon him: He is indeed despised and rejected, as by the *Jewish* rulers, (*Luke* xx. 17.) so by all carnal *Jews*, and unbelievers, who *see no form, comeliness, or beauty in him to desire him,* (Isa. liii. 2.) and *will not come to him, that they might have life;* (John v. 40.) but he was chosen of God, and appointed to be the foundation of his church from all eternity; (*chap.* i. 20.) and is most excellent in himself, dear and honourable in the sight of God his Father, (who has highly exalted him) and in the esteem of all that believe in him, (*ver.* 7.) as completely able to bear the whole weight of God's glory, and the salvation of his church, which he has laid upon him.

5 Ye also as lively stones, are built up a spiritual house, an holy priesthood, to offer

5 And ye, thus coming to him, are, as it were, living stones, (ὡς λιθοι ζωντες) as being spiritually alive by derivation from him, in virtue of your union with him, who is your living and enlivening foundation; and are erected and edified in the noblest manner

NOTE.

* *A living stone* in the *literal* sense may be thought an inconsistent idea. But as this and several other expressions in the following verse are evidently *metaphorical*, and designed to signify *Christ* as a *spiritual* foundation, and his *members* as the *building* erected upon it, in allusion and preference to the temple at *Jerusalem*, which the *Jews* looked upon as their highest glory; there is a striking beauty, vigour, and emphasis in the language, and no more impropriety in Christ's being spoken of as *a living stone*, than as *living bread*, and *a living way*, (John vi. 51. and Heb. x. 20.) to shew his excellence above all other bread, or ways. And the apostle *Peter*'s speaking of him, under the metaphor of *a living stone*, shews that he did not account *himself*, but *Christ only*, to be the *Foundation-stone* of the church.

offer up spiritual sacrifices, acceptable to God by Jesus Christ.

ner upon him, being *built together for a habitation of God through the Spirit;* (Eph. ii. 22.) all the parts of which building are of a spiritual nature, such as God delights to dwell in after a more gracious and beneficial manner, than he ever did in the temple, which was built of the most beautiful stones: (*Luke* xxi. 5.) Ye are also become more excellent priests to God, than those under the law, to bring and present, not ceremonial and typical sacrifices, like them, much less atoning sacrifices, like *that* of our Lord; but spiritual offerings of self-dedication, prayer and praises, alms-deeds, and all sort of fruits of righteousness, (*Rom.* xii. 1. *Phil.* i. 11. and *Heb.* xiii. 15, 16.) which are well-pleasing to God, and graciously accepted of him, through, and on account of the propitiatory sacrifice and intercession of Christ, the only mediator, who has reconciled you to God, introduces you to him, and renders both your persons and services acceptable in his sight.

6 Wherefore also it is contained in the scripture, Behold, I lay in Sion a chief corner-stone, elect, precious: and he that believeth on him shall not be confounded.

6 Accordingly, we have a testimony of the following purport concerning Christ, as it is contained in the prophetic writings of the Old Testament, (*Is.* xxviii. 16.) Observe, says God, with attention and holy admiration, faith and hope, love and joy, I, the sovereign Lord of all, have of my own mere good pleasure appointed and provided, fitted, prepared, and placed the Messiah in my Church *, as a sure foundation and chief corner-stone, which has been tried and proved, and found effectual, to unite *Jews* and *Gentiles*, the Old and New Testament-church, and cement all the members of *both* firmly and compactly together; and to add strength and beauty to them; a stone, which I, in infinite wisdom and grace, have chosen for this purpose; which is excellent and honourable in itself, and exceeding dear to me. And whosoever he be, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, a greater or lesser sinner, that depends entirely on Christ, or builds by faith on him, as his sure and only foundation, shall never be ashamed to own him, or be confounded by any of his enemies for professing his name; nor shall he ever be ashamed or confounded, through any disappointment of his hope in

NOTE.

* *In Sion* may likewise possibly refer to *Jerusalem*, which is often called *Sion* and *mount Sion* in the *psalms* and the *prophets;* and so God's *laying this chief Corner stone in Sion*, may point to *the place* where our Lord finished the work of redemption; where the glad tidings of salvation by him were first published, and from thence spread abroad; (*Psal.* cx. 2. and *Isa.* ii. 3.) and where the first gospel-church was erected on this foundation. (*Acts* ii. 41,—47.) But as *Sion* and *mount-Sion* are very commonly used for God's church and people in the Old Testament, and in *Heb.* xii. 22. I have rather chose to give the paraphrase in that sense, as most agreeable to the current of the context.

Christ, as they are, who inconsiderately build on a sandy foundation, and whose vain confidences are defeated, through rash and precipitate measures, and over-haste to accomplish them: (see the note on *Rom.* ix. 33.) But he shall *have boldness in the day of judgment*, (1 John iv. 17.) as one discharged from guilt and condemnation, and made perfect in holiness and happiness, through the Redeemer's righteousness.

7 Unto you therefore which believe *he is* precious: but unto them which be disobedient, the stone which the builders disallowed, the same is made the head of the corner.

7 He therefore is a high honour, (τιμη) and cannot but be of high esteem and endearment to you who believe in him, and build all your hopes entirely upon him; he, in his person, offices, and benefits, and in his relation to you, is altogether lovely in your account, and is, and for ever will be, your crown and glory, honouring you, and honoured by you: But to them who, being disobedient to God and him, and to his word, set him at nought and reject him by unbelief, this very stone, which the *Jewish* rulers, who pretended to be, and ought to have been, the builders of the church of *Israel*, would not receive, but disapproved of, as the foundation of the gospel-church, according to a prophetic account of him and them; (*Ps.* cxviii. 22.) even he is by the ordination and settlement of God, notwithstanding all their spite and rage against him, the foundation, chief corner-stone, strength and glory of his spiritual house.

8 And a stone of stumbling, and a rock of offence, *even to them* which stumble at the word, being disobedient, whereunto also they were appointed.

8 And at the same time, according to another prophecy, (*Isa.* viii. 14.) he is become, like a stone that lies in mens way, at which they stumble and fall to their hurt, and like a rock, which they rashly dash themselves against to their destruction; he is so to them, who are offended at the doctrine of the gospel, which sets him forth as the only foundation that God has laid, and besides which no other can be laid, to answer its end; (1 *Cor.* iii. 11.) they being obstinately unbelieving and refractory, to which God, in his holy sovereignty and righteous judgment, purposed to leave them, as to the free choice of their own perverse hearts; and, for which, he determined that this stone should fall, and his justice should be glorified on them, to their utter ruin. (See the note on *Rom.* ix. 18.)

9 But ye *are* a chosen generation, a royal priesthood, an holy nation, a peculiar people; that ye should shew forth the praises of him who hath called you

9 But ye, who are built upon Christ, as your foundation, are, in the best and most valuable sense, partakers of all the blessings, that were signified by the external privileges and national honours of the visible church of *Israel;* (Exod. xix. 6. and Deut. vii. 6.) ye are a new-born generation and kindred (γενος) of spiritual and noble birth, whom God has set apart for himself by eternal choice, and effectual calling; ye have

you out of darkness into his marvellous light:

have an unction from the Holy One, and are *kings and priests unto God*, (Rev. i. 6.) as, like *princes*, ye have power with him, and victory over sin, Satan, and the world, together with a holy dominion over your own spirits, and are heirs of the kingdom of heaven; and as, like *priests*, ye are separated from the rest of the world, and consecrated to God for offering spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ: (*ver.* 5.) Ye are also a holy society formed into one spiritual body, like a nation collected together, under Christ your Lord and King, sanctified by his Spirit, governed by his laws, and embarked in the same common cause and interest: And ye are a purchased and special property to him, that, suitable to your dignities, privileges, blessings, and obligations, ye might both really and intentionally display the glory of divine virtues and perfections, such as the infinite wisdom and power, holiness, justice, goodness, and truth of God; and might shew forth, in word and deed, his honour and praise, who has called you by his grace, and delivered you from the darkness of ignorance and error, sin and misery, in which ye were formerly involved; and has brought you into the most wonderful and affecting light of truth and grace, holiness and comfort, which he has caused to shine in your hearts: (2 *Cor.* iv. 6.)

10 Which in time past *were* not a people, but *are* now the people of God: which had not obtained mercy, but now have obtained mercy.

10 Who, for ages past, have been disowned of God, and divorced from his visible covenant; (*Jer.* iii. 8. and *Hos.* i. 6, 9.) but now by the grace of the gospel, through Jesus Christ, are brought into the sweet and abiding relation of a covenant-people to him; and who, during all those former ages, were shut out from the distinguishing effects of his special mercy, but have now found mercy with him, unto the renovation of nature, the forgiveness of sins, and justification of life, according to *Hosea*'s prophecy: (*chap.* ii. 23.) And this, in a higher sense, may be said of those *Gentiles* among you, who are now brought to the faith of Christ, and so become the spiritual seed of *Abraham*. (See the note on *Rom.* ix. 25.)

11 Dearly beloved, I beseech *you*, as strangers and pilgrims, abstain from fleshly lusts which war against the soul;

11 In consideration therefore of these distinguishing favours, which God has bestowed upon you, my dear brethren, whom he has *formed for himself, that ye might shew forth his praise*, (Is. xliii. 21.) I earnestly entreat, and exhort you (παρακαλω) to look upon yourselves as pilgrims and strangers upon earth, who are travelling onward to a better country; (*Heb.* xi. 13, 16.) and I beseech you, as such, to renounce and keep clear of all those inward workings of sensual inclinations, inordinate affections, and desires after

ter earthly things, which arise from the corruption of nature, and exert themselves by the body; and are contrary to the liberty, peace and honour, purity and holiness of your renewed souls; and, as the worst of all enemies, are engaged in a perpetual war against them, and do their utmost to defile, disturb, ensnare, and destroy them.

12 Having your conversation honest among the Gentiles: that whereas they speak against you as evil-doers, they may by *your* good works which they shall behold, glorify God in the day of visitation.

12 Take heed that the whole of your behaviour towards, and under the observation of, the unconverted *Gentiles*, among whom ye live, be decent, honourable, and commendable for its amiable beauty, (καλην) every way worthy of your holy profession; to the end that, whereas they seek all occasions to reproach you, on account of your profession of Christ, and to speak against you, as though ye were a refractory, useless, and mischievous sort of people, and practisers of iniquity, they may be effectually confuted by your regular, blameless, holy, benevolent, and lovely deportment in every relation of life, by means of which, they, as eye-witnesses of it, may be induced to think well of you and of your religion, and may be themselves brought to glorify God, by admiring his grace in you, and by imitating your good conversation in Christ, when they come narrowly to inspect into it, and when he shall look upon them and visit them in his mercy, (*Luke* i. 68.) and shall set his gospel home with light and power upon their hearts; and so render it effectual to their own salvation.

13 Submit yourselves to every ordinance of man for the Lord's sake: whether it be to the king, as supreme;

14 Or unto governors, as unto them that are sent by him for the punishment of evil-doers, and for the praise of them that do well.

13, 14 In order hereunto, let me guard you against some things, that give occasions of great offence to your enemies, as for instance, how strong soever the prejudices of some of you may be, through *Jewish* notions, against obeying heathen magistrates, remember, that as the *theocracy*, or that divine form of government, in which God was the King of *Israel*, is expired, it is now your duty, as Christians, to be subject in all matters of a *civil* nature, to every secular power, which is legally set over you by the appointment and consent of the community; which, on that account, may be called the *ordinance of man;* and yet is the *ordinance of God*, as he has appointed and ordered it for the good of human society, and by his providence directs and inclines bodies of people to set up such a form of it, as they apprehend to be best for the preservation of all their civil and religious rights, liberties, privileges and properties, and for their protection and safety in an enjoyment of them: (see the notes on *Rom.* xiii. 1, 2.) And ye ought to submit yourselves to its rulers in obedience to the command of the Lord Christ, (*Matth.* xxii. 21.) and for the honour of his name, that it may not be evil spoken of,

as

as though he were the author of a religion which subverts the laws and rights of civil society. Ye therefore should think yourselves obliged, in conscience, to pay chearful obedience in all lawful things to unbelievers, as well as others, that hold the reins of government where ye live, according to their political character and authority; whether to the sovereign, such as a king or emperor, like the *Roman Cæsar;* or to subordinate magistrates, like the governors of provinces, and inferior officers, as those that are deputed by him, and act under his commission, in the several parts of his dominion, to execute the just laws of the country, according to the ends for which God has appointed their authority; as particularly for inflicting deserved punishment upon those that are immoral and profane, disobedient to the just laws of government, injurious to the lives and properties of others, and disturbers of the public peace; and for protecting, encouraging, favouring, and rewarding those who behave as becomes faithful subjects, and are orderly, sober, honest, and benevolent in their stations. (*Rom.* xiii. 3,—5.)

15 For so is the will of God, that with well-doing ye may put to silence the ignorance of foolish men:

15 For it is the declared will and command of God, and well-pleasing in his sight, that, by a regular and commendable course of life, ye disprove, and stop the mouth of unreasonable and wicked calumnies, which men of weak and prejudiced minds, who are strangers to God, and to your true character, would raise against you and your religion, as if it made you bad subjects.

16 As free, and not using *your* liberty for a cloke of maliciousness, but as the servants of God.

16 It is his will, that ye conduct in such a manner, as becomes those, who, as his free men, are indeed delivered from the tyranny of sin and Satan, and from the ceremonial yoke, and the curse of the moral law; and are free from all obligations to submit to impositions upon conscience by any authority of men: And he requires, that ye never turn this liberty into licentiousness; nor make pretences of asserting it, as a cover to sedition and wickedness, (τῆς κακίας) or any malignant evil whatsoever; but that ye use it only for such good purposes, as God approves of in them that are his *servants*, as well as free-men; and are bound to do every thing in obedience to him, as your supreme Lord and King, who has the highest demands upon you, and enjoins the duty ye owe to him, and to others, according to his will.

17 Honour all men. Love the brotherhood. Fear God. Honour the king.

17 Under this conviction therefore, see that ye esteem, and pay a suitable respect, on every occasion, to all ye have to do with, according to their several ranks and stations, whether they be high or low, rich or poor, Christians or heathens, as far as any commend-

able

able thing appears in them. Entertain and express the most affectionate love to your believing brethren of all denominations, as members of Christ, and of the household of faith together with yourselves. Do every thing with a religious, filial, and reverential fear of God, and of offending him, like true worshippers of him, who always act with a conscience void of offence toward God and toward men. Upon this principle, and as far as is consistent with it, behave as loyal subjects in paying all civil homage and respect to the person and office of the chief ruler, as such, whom God in his providence has invested with legal dignity and authority over you, even though, like *Nero* the present emperor, he be a heathen prince and inveterate enemy to Christianity.

18 Servants *be* subject to *your* masters with all fear, not only to the good and gentle, but also to the froward.

18 As to those of you who are (οἰκεται) household servants of every rank, whether slaves or not, that may be persuaded to think yourselves no longer obliged to pay obedience to unbelieving masters, it certainly is your duty to be humbly submissive to their lawful orders, with a becoming reverence of them, whatever be their religious character; and to serve them with fidelity, and fear of offending them, and of offending God, by disobedience to their just commands. (*Col.* iii. 22.) This duty is to be paid, not only to such masters as are generous, kind, meek, and merciful in their temper and behaviour; but even to those also, who are austere and morose in their carriage to their servants, especially if it be only because they are Christians.

19 For this *is* thank-worthy, if a man for conscience toward God endure grief, suffering wrongfully.

19 For it is matter of praise, and favours of a gracious spirit, and is (χαρις) a free gift of God, and acceptable to him, if any one, for the sake of his religion, and from a conscience toward God, patiently and quietly suffers abusive, grievous, and injurious treatment, without any just provocation given by him, or any fault of his own.

20 For what glory *is it*, if when ye be buffeted for your faults, ye shall take it patiently? but if when ye do well, and suffer *for it*, ye take it patiently; this *is* acceptable with God.

20 For what honour to Christ, or to yourselves, or what room for commendation can there be, if, when ye have been guilty of any neglect, unfaithfulness, or misdemeanor, ye are severely beaten for it according to your deserts, and are forced to submit to it, as the fruit and due reward of your own evil doings? There can be no credit to religion, or to you in this; your crime makes such sufferings a reproach, instead of an honour, both to God and yourselves. But if when ye perform the duties of your places with diligence and fidelity, and are conscientious in your religious devotions, and are chastised for it, and bear it all with humble patience and submission; this is an excellent

and

and holy temper, which God freely gives, and is highly pleased with. (χαρις.)

21 For even hereunto were ye called: because Christ also suffered for us, leaving us an example that ye should follow his steps:

21 For when ye became Christians, ye were called to submit, even with patience and meekness, to injuries and reproaches for Christ and the gospel's sake; because our Lord Jesus himself, willingly underwent the greatest sufferings and revilings, in his love and kindness to us *, and particularly to you, for your advantage, and indeed in your room and stead; and therein, among still higher designs of his death, (see *ver.* 24. and *chap.* iii. 18.) left you a most perfect pattern of patience in sufferings, to the end that ye, in love, duty, and honour to him, might tread in his steps, as exactly as possible, by imitating him in this, and in the whole of his blameless behaviour.

22 Who did no sin, neither was guile found in his mouth:

22 Who, notwithstanding all the false and malicious accusations of his enemies, never was guilty of the least fault in any one act of his life, but was *holy, harmless, undefiled, separate from sinners,* and *went about doing good:* (Heb. vii. 26. and Acts x. 38.) Nor was there ever found the least insincerity, deceit, or falsehood in his words, or doctrine; nor could the worst of his adversaries ever prove any thing of that kind upon him: But in the most eminent sense, (answerable to *Levi* his type) *the law of truth was in his mouth; and iniquity was not found in his lips:* (Malac. ii. 6.)

23 Who, when he was reviled, reviled not again; when he suffered, he threatened not: but committed *himself* to him that judgeth righteously:

23 Who, when he was shamefully reproached, as a blasphemer, an impostor, and one possessed of a diabolical spirit, and was contemptuously spit upon, and derided under the mock-title of a king, never returned the least opprobrious language upon his insolent and impious adversaries; when he suffered the utmost indignities and barbarities in the judgment-hall, and at his death, he never discovered the least impatience, nor threatned to avenge himself, as he justly might, and easily could, upon his persecutors; but meekly and calmly referred himself and his cause to his heavenly Father; trusting in him to give righteous judgment between himself and his crucifiers; and at the same time praying, that, instead of avenging their wickedness in murdering him, he would graciously forgive them, through his atoning blood: (see *Isa.* liii. 7. and *Luke* xxiii. 34.)

24 Who his own self bare our sins in

24 Who, being sinless in himself, not only left a matchless example of patience in his sufferings; but chearfully

NOTE.

* Those copies, that read (υπερ υμων, υμιν) *for you—leaving you* an example, seem best to comport with the structure of the sentence; since *ye were called—that ye should follow his steps* are expressed by verbs of the *second person plural.* (εκληθητε,—ινα επακολουθησητε.)

in his own body on the tree, that we, being dead to sin, should live unto righteousness: by whose stripes ye were healed.

chearfully submitted to them with a still much more important and endearing view, as he freely became our surety and substitute, to answer for our sins, and bear the punishment, that in law and justice was due for them, which *he put away by the sacrifice of himself*, (Heb. ix. 26.) when his body was lifted up on the cross in the greatest extremity of torture, and his *soul*, which was also made *an offering for sin*, (Isa. liii. 10.) *was exceeding sorrowful even unto death;* (Matth. xxvi. 38.) to the end that, by the merit, and in virtue of his sufferings, we being freed from the dominion, as well as from the guilt of sin, like persons dead to it, might live in all holy obedience, and bring forth fruits of righteousness to God through him; (*Rom.* vi. 2, 6, 11, 13.) by whose wounds, which were made upon his body by scourgings and piercings, unto the drawing of blood, we, in the application of this sovereign balm, through faith in him, are cured of the worst of all wounds and maladies which sin had made upon us; wounds beyond all comparison worse than any sores that can be made upon your bodies, who are servants, and even slaves, by the severest stripes that the most cruel masters can lay upon you. This therefore should thoroughly reconcile you to them, and quiet and comfort you under them.

25 For ye were as sheep going astray; but are now returned unto the Shepherd and Bishop of your souls.

25 For ye, while left to yourselves in your unconverted state, were, like wandering sheep, even the lost sheep of the house of *Israel*, running astray from God, from his fold, ordinances, and commandments; and running from the ways of truth, righteousness, and peace, into every sinful and dangerous path that leads to eternal destruction: But now, through the enlightening and renewing operations of the Spirit, by means of the gospel, (ἀπεστράφητε) ye are turned back from the error of your ways to Christ, that *great Shepherd of the sheep*, (Heb. xiii. 20.) and kind observer, visitor, and inspector, or overseer of your precious and immortal souls, that he, taking a tender care of you as his charge, may feed and nourish, guide and govern, heal and defend you from all evil, and conduct you safe to glory.

RECOLLECTIONS.

No mother's milk can be more eagerly desired, or better relished by hungry infants than the pure unadulterated word of God is by new born souls, for their spiritual nourishment, who have tasted that the Lord is gracious. And O how precious is Christ to them, who as living stones are built upon him as their living foundation, which God has chosen, and laid with high approbation in his church! They shall never be ashamed of their faith and hope in him, and profession of him, how much soever others may despise, reject, and stumble at him to their own destruction, through the wilful disobedience to which God justly determined to leave them, and for which to punish them. But how great are the privileges and blessings

ings of true believers! Though they were once ſtrangers to God, and wandering in the paths that take hold on hell, they have now found mercy with him, who has choſen and called them out of miſerable darkneſs into aſtoniſhing and joyful light; and has made them a holy and peculiar people, yea, kings and prieſts, to offer up ſpiritual ſacrifices to God with acceptance through Jeſus Chriſt. He has bore their ſins on the croſs, and taken them away by the ſacrifice of himſelf; has healed their ſpiritual maladies by being wounded for them; and has reduced them to himſelf by his grace, that they may be under his inſpection and care, as the great Shepherd and overſeer of their ſouls. How ſtrong and endearing then are their obligations and encouragements to be continually coming by faith to him; to abandon all malignant thoughts and words, and all ſenſual appetites that war againſt the purity, peace, and happineſs of the ſoul; to behave as pilgrims and ſtrangers on the earth; to die to ſin, and live to righteouſneſs; and to order the whole of their converſation in ſuch an honourable manner, as may ſilence gainſayers, and recommend religion to them, and be the means of inducing them to glorify God, when he ſhall viſit them with his grace! How ſhould this laudable behaviour run through all relations of life, upon principles of conſcience, and for Chriſt's ſake, that the liberty, wherewith he has made his diſciples free, may not be turned into a cloke for licentiouſneſs! They ought to be dutifully ſubject to the laws of civil government, and to ſupreme and ſubordinate rulers, who are appointed of God for the preſervation of liberty and property, and of the public peace, by ſuitable rewards and puniſhments. Due reſpect ſhould be ſhown to all ranks of mankind, and eſpecially to Chriſtian brethren, in the fear of the Lord. And ſervants particularly ought to be obedient in all lawful things to their maſters of every character, and to be careful that they never be guilty of any fault to bring them under corrections, which would turn to their own ſhame. But if, through the moroſe and wicked tempers of their maſters, they be ſcourged for righteouſneſs ſake, and patiently endure it; This, as to themſelves, is acceptable to God, and what they, as Chriſtians, are called to. And O what a complete and animating example of well-doing, and of patience in ſufferings, has our crucified Lord ſet them, and all of us who believe in him, that we might tread in his ſteps! He was entirely ſinleſs, free from all deceit; and never returned opprobrious language, or impatient threats, for the moſt infamous and cruel abuſes; but left himſelf and his cauſe with God, truſting in him for all events. And how ſhould we be excited to bear our ſoreſt trials with a like meek and humble ſpirit, ſince our iniquities have deſerved them at the hand of God, if not of men; and ſince, by the ſufferings of Chriſt in our ſtead, the principal end of which was to make atonement for ſin, our ſpiritual wounds are healed, which are every way worſe than any that can be made upon our bodies by the utmoſt ſeverity of men!

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle proceeds to recommend the duties of wives and huſbands, 1,—7. *Exhorts all Chriſtians to mutual agreement in principle, affection, and kindneſs*, 8,—13. *And encourages them to patience under perſecutions for righteouſneſs ſake, in conſideration of Chriſt's having patiently ſuffered in their ſtead, and of the rich advantage they have thereby*, 14,—22.

TEXT.

LIKEWISE, ye wives, *be* in ſubjection to your own huſbands; that if any obey not the word, they alſo may without the word be won by

PARAPHRASE.

HAVING diſpatched what relates to the duties of Chriſtian ſubjects and ſervants, let us in like manner go on to thoſe of the conjugal relation, beginning with what is incumbent upon *believing wives*; and to ſuch I muſt ſay, whatever difference there be, as to religion, between you and your lawful huſbands, whom ye may have married before ye yourſelves were converted,

by the conversation of the wives.

converted, ye ought to behave with an obliging and affectionate submission to them in all reasonable things of a temporal concern, to the end that, if any of them pay no regard to the word of God, which is the ordinary means of conversion, they, though not attending on its ministrations, may be allured and gained over to a good esteem of it, and of Christ and his ways according to it, by the manifest appearance of its powerful influence to produce an exemplary, meek and humble, sweet and engaging temper and carriage in those of you who are wives; ye ought, I say, thus to behave, in hope that this, by the blessing of God, may be the means of bringing them under the hearing of the word, and so of saving their souls. (1 *Cor.* vii. 16.)

2 While they behold your chaste conversation *coupled* with fear.

2 While they are daily eye-witnesses of, and observe and reflect upon, the purity, sobriety, chastity, and modesty of all your deportment with due respect to them, and fear of offending them; and as doing every thing in the fear of God, with a religious reverence of him, and in obedience to his commands.

3 Whose adorning let it not be that outward *adorning* of plaiting the hair, and of wearing of gold, or of putting on of apparel:

3 Let it be the study and endeavour of such godly women to recommend themselves and their Christian profession to their husbands, not by the external ornaments of dress, which (how lawful soever in itself according to their stations) too many of that sex are apt to pride themselves in, as though it were their chief adorning; such as putting their hair into fine plaits and curls; and wearing gold-rings, bracelets, or chains; or garments embroidered with gold; or decking themselves with any such sort of rich and splendid attire, as lewd and light women use, for tempting and ensnaring the hearts of the unwary. (See the note on 1 *Tim.* ii. 9.)

4 But *let it be* the hidden man of the heart, in that which is not corruptible, *even the ornament* of a meek and quiet spirit, which is in the sight of God of great price.

4 But let it be their principal care, in preference to all other ways of women's setting themselves off, to excel in the inward adornings of knowledge, virtue and truth, grace and holiness, which, like the *new man*, (Eph. iv. 24.) is seated in the heart, and is the finest dress of the soul, that makes it *all glorious within;* (Psal. xlv. 13.) and, though concealed from outward observation, as it lies in the heart, is discovered by its lovely fruits in the life; and is both durable, and proof against temptations to corrupt it, and incomparably more beautiful, and excellent, and advantageous to the immortal soul, than all the fading, uncertain, perishing, and ensnaring pomp and gaiety of outward apparel can be to the mean, frail, and mortal body; and consists, among other things, of a modest, humble, and gentle, calm, tractable, and peaceable temper of spirit, free from pride and turbulent passions;

paſſions: How much ſoever this may be deſpiſed, and the deckings of the body be preferred before it, by vain minds, it is of high account with God, and ought to be the ambition of women that would approve themſelves to him, in imitation of the meek and humble Jeſus, (*Mat.* xi. 29.) and as always under God's all-ſeeing eye.

5 For after this manner in the old time, the holy women alſo, who truſted in God, adorned themſelves, being in ſubjection unto their own huſbands;

5 For this is the way that holy and religious women took, in former ages, to ingratiate themſelves with their huſbands, even in the moſt ancient times, when they had leſs advantages than there now are, to underſtand, and excite them to their duty: They, whoſe hope and truſt were in the Lord for all the bleſſings of this life, and of that which is to come, put on thoſe inward adornings, and recommended and approved themſelves, after this endearing manner, to their own proper huſbands, in modeſt reverence and ſubjection to them;

6 Even as Sarah obeyed Abraham, calling him lord: whoſe daughters ye are, as long as ye do well, and are not afraid with any amazement.

6 Even as *Sarah*, the beloved wife of *Abraham*, the father of the faithful, hearkened and paid a becoming obedience to him, in token of which ſhe, with a reſpectful deference, ſtyled him *her lord*: (Gen. xviii. 12.) And as ye are her natural offspring; ſo ye are and will appear to be her genuine children, in the moral and ſpiritual ſenſe, by a laudable imitation of her in faith and holineſs; while, after her example, ye behave well, and chearfully diſcharge your conjugal duty toward your huſbands, without being terrified with fears of their, or any other perſon's diſpleaſure, on account of your religion, or of their not being mollified in their temper toward you by your winning carriage toward them; and without ſuch unbelieving confuſion, as ſeized *Sarah*, when the Lord ſpake of her having a ſon. (*Gen.* xviii. 9,—15.)

7 Likewiſe, ye huſbands, dwell with them according to knowledge, giving honour unto the wife, as unto the weaker veſſel, and as being heirs together of the grace of life; that your prayers be not hindered.

7 It is alſo needful to exhort thoſe of you who are believing huſbands, that, on your part, ye take care to cohabit and aſſociate on all occaſions in a faithful and friendly manner with your wives, and treat them with decency, kindneſs, and good humour, according to the rules of prudence, and that ſuperior knowledge, which ye are ſuppoſed to have, by the goſpel-revelation, of the duty ye owe to them. Ye ought to pay high reſpect to the woman, who ſtands in this neareſt of all relations to you, by delighting in her, conſulting her comfort and happineſs, ſupporting her credit and authority in the family, providing honourably for her, putting due confidence in her, and never uſing her like a ſlave, but as a help-meet of great importance to you, who have your own infirmities to be borne with by her; though ſhe, being of a delicate, weak, and tender frame, may be more liable to other

other infirmities of body or mind, that call for your compassion toward her, and your bearing with her. And ye ought to be the rather induced to this, as considering that, in case she be a Christian, she, in spiritual concerns, is upon a level with you; ye being jointly heirs alike of all heavenly happiness, which is the best of life, and the gift of God's free grace equally to you both; and that, if she be an unbeliever, your behaviour toward her ought to be in such an endearing manner, as, by the blessing of God, shall win her over to the faith of Christ, that she, through the riches of divine grace, may be an heiress with you of eternal glory; and so may not be sowred in her temper, and prejudised against joining with you, morning and evening, in family-prayer; and that important duty may neither be neglected, nor uncomfortably and unprofitably performed; nor your spirits be put out of frame for a due discharge of it; nor any of your prayers, whether social or secret, may be prevented, or defeated, through your morose, imperious, and unchristian temper and behaviour toward her.

8 Finally, *be ye* all of one mind, having compassion one of another, love as brethren, *be* pitiful, *be* courteous:

8 In fine, as to the duties which equally concern you all in every situation of life, as believers in Christ, labour to cultivate a mutual agreement in the great doctrines and duties of the gospel, and a harmonious temper, feelingly sympathizing (συμπαθεις) one with another in all afflictions; maintain and exercise an affectionate brotherly spirit in disposition, thought, word, and deed, towards each other, as becomes children of the same heavenly Father; shew the tenderest bowels of compassion to those that labour under weaknesses, infirmities, or troubles of any kind, whether spiritual or temporal; and let all your carriage one towards another, and towards all men, be affable, friendly, and engaging, (φιλοφρονες) to recommend religion to all around you, by shewing what a sweet influence it has upon your hearts and behaviour.

9 Not rendering evil for evil, or railing for railing: but contrariwise, blessing; knowing that ye are thereunto called, that ye should inherit a blessing.

9 Never suffer yourselves to meditate revenge by doing an ill turn to those that have injured you; nor ever revile those that have reviled you; remembering what a noble example of this sort Christ has set for your imitation: (*chap.* ii. 23.) But on the contrary, see that ye, like him, and in obedience to his command, (*Matth.* v. 4. and *Luke* xxiii. 34.) pray for blessings to those who curse you, and despitefully use you; knowing that ye, as Christians, are called by divine grace, and obliged by the example and authority of Christ, to give into this amiable temper and behaviour, to the end that (ινα) ye, as the children of God and of his own likeness, may inherit, in temporals

rals and ſpirituals, whatever ſhall be a bleſſing to you in this life, as well as everlaſting bliſs and glory in that which is to come.

10 For he that will love life, and ſee good days, let him refrain his tongue from evil, and his lips that they ſpeak no guile.

10 For even as to this preſent world, whoever he be that is deſirous of enjoying life with comfort, and ſeeing many days of proſperity and peace upon earth; his beſt way for attaining this end, is to fall in with the divine directions of the following purport, (*Pſ.* xxxiv. 12,—16.) Let him bridle his tongue, and ceaſe from all profane and filthy ſpeaking, and from all opprobrious language; and keep the door of his lips from uttering falſehood, or deceit of any kind.

11 Let him eſchew evil, and do good; let him ſeek peace, and enſue it.

11 Let him have an abhorrence of, and carefully avoid every thing that is ſinful in itſelf, or prejudicial to others; and practiſe every thing that is in its own nature good, and beneficial to all whom he has to do with; let him ſeek the things that make for peace, and do what in him lies, conſiſtent with a good conſcience, to promote it in all civil and religious ſocieties; in his family, among his neighbours, friends, and enemies, and between himſelf and them; and let him ſtudiouſly and ſteadily follow after this extenſive peace by all prudent and honourable means, and earneſtly purſue it when it ſeems to flee from him, that, through the divine favour, he may lead a quiet and peaceable life in all godlineſs and honeſty in this world, till he arrive at the glory of a better. (See *Matth.* v. 9. and *Jam.* iii. 18.)

12 For the eyes of the Lord *are* over the righteous, and his ears *are open* unto their prayers: but the face of the Lord *is* againſt them that do evil.

12 For the great Lord of all, *whoſe eyes run to and fro throughout the whole earth, to ſhew himſelf ſtrong on behalf of them that fear him,* and *whoſe kingdom rules over all,* (2 Chron. xvi. 9. and Pſ. ciii. 19.) takes ſpecial notice of, bears a peculiar affection to, and exerciſes a kind and watchful care in his providence over thoſe that are righteous in his ſight through Jeſus Chriſt, and are upright in their hearts and lives; and he is graciouſly attentive, like one who liſtens with an open ear, to the voice of their ſupplications, that are offered up with humility, faith, and fervour, for help againſt their oppreſſive enemies, and for ſhewing them ſeaſonable mercy of a temporal as well as ſpiritual nature, according to what he ſees to be beſt for them. But the indignation of the Lord, like that which appears in the ſtern, angry, and wrathful countenance of a powerful and provoked enemy, is utterly averſe to, and burns againſt all evil-doers, as a deteſtable generation, *to cut off the remembrance of them from the earth.* (Pſal. xxxiv. 16.)

13 And who *is* he that will harm you, if ye be followers

13 And as the Lord bears theſe contrary diſpoſitions toward the righteous and the wicked, which are all in his hands, and under his dominion, where is the creature,

lowers of that which *is* good?

creature, whether man or devil, that shall be permitted to destroy your truest happiness, or work your ruin, or bring any greater hardships upon you than ye shall be enabled to bear, and triumph over with honour and advantage, if, in an entire dependence on him, and devotedness to him, ye be imitators (τȣ̃ ἀγαθȣ̃ μιμηταί) of God in his goodness and holiness, or of any one who, from a conscience toward God, doth that which is benevolent and acceptable to him? This will keep you out of harm's way, and ye will be safe under his care. And what monster of human nature can be supposed so very wicked and cruel, as to seek the hurt of such an inoffensive and beneficent neighbour?

14 But and if ye suffer for righteousness' sake, happy *are ye:* and be not afraid of their terror, neither be troubled;

14 But if, after all, the providence of God should suffer you to come under the severities and reproaches of malignant adversaries, on account of your righteous and religious character, as professors of Christ and his gospel; ye are nevertheless exceeding happy in his favour and love under such outward calamities: And ye ought not to be terrified at their threatenings, or at the worst they can do against you; nor be filled with discouragement, consternation, and confusion in your own minds, as though they would turn to your real disgrace and ruin.

15 But sanctify the Lord God in your hearts: and *be* ready always to *give* an answer to every man that asketh you a reason of the hope that is in you, with meekness and fear:

15 But still keep up high and honourable thoughts of the Lord Jehovah, with a holy reverential fear of him, (*Isa.* viii. 12, 13.) and with an entire trust, in his infinite wisdom, power, mercy, and faithfulness for your security, and for ordering all events to your everlasting honour and joy: (*Matth.* v. 10,—12.) And, with this dependence upon him, stand prepared at all times to make your apology (ἀπολογίαν) by word and deed, in defence of your Christian faith and confidence, to every one, who, either in a court of judicature, or in familiar conversation, or with a religious intent for his own or other Christians satisfaction, desires a reasonable account of the grounds of your hopes of salvation according to the gospel, for which ye willingly suffer: And let this be done with a meek and modest air, temper of spirit, and manner of expression; and with a serious gravity and humble reverence of God, and jealousy over yourselves, lest ye offend him by behaving in any way dishonourable to him, by concealing the truth, or saying any thing contrary to it; as also with a cautious fear of offending any persons by speaking disrespectfully to them, whether magistrates or others, who may insist on such an account.

16 Having a good conscience; that

16 *Herein exercising yourselves, to have always a conscience void of offence toward God and man;*

(Acts

that whereas they speak evil of you, as of evil-doers, they may be ashamed that falsly accuse your good conversation in Christ.

(Acts xxiv. 16.) *and holding the mystery of faith in a pure conscience,* (1 Tim. iii. 9.) that can reflect with satisfaction and peace on whatever ye say or do; to the end that, with respect to those things in which your enemies charge and upbraid you, as a mischievous wicked sort of people, who work iniquity, foment sedition, and are injurious to society and the public welfare, they may be effectually confuted, and forced with shame to retract their slanders, who are reproachfully and maliciously traducing (επηρεαζοντες) your blameless, humble, and benevolent life and conversation, which ye lead to the honour of Christ, through faith in him, and by virtue derived from him.

17 For *it is* better, if the will of God be so, that ye suffer for well-doing, than for evil-doing.

17 For it undoubtedly is every way more eligible, honourable, and advantageous, and ye will have the nobler support and satisfaction in your own souls, if it please God, in his providence, to permit outward tribulations to befal you, merely on account of your acquitting yourselves well to him, and to your own consciences, in doing what is good and right, and acceptable to him, than they could be, were they to be brought upon you for any crimes or follies of your own, which would add a terrible sting to them, and make them an insupportable burden, that would otherwise have sat easy upon you.

18 For Christ also hath once suffered for sins, the just for the unjust, (that he might bring us to God) being put to death in the flesh, but quickened by the Spirit:

18 For, in the case of sufferings without any faults of your own to deserve them, ye are only conformed to the image of your Lord and Saviour; and may well bear them patiently after his example, and for his sake; when ye consider that he, though perfectly holy and righteous, without the least iniquity in heart or life to deserve any ill usage, underwent the most ignominious and agonizing sufferings for the sins of others to expiate them; which he did, not by repeated offerings, like the legal sacrifices, but once for all, as, through the infinite dignity and perfection of his sacrifice, he made complete atonement at once. (*Heb.* vii. 27. and ix. 26, 28.) He, the just and holy One, suffered all the punishment due to sin in the room and stead of unrighteous and ungodly sinners, that he might reconcile such as we are to God, (*Rom.* v. 6, 8, 10.) and bring us to a holy communion with him, conformity and obedience to him here, and an everlasting enjoyment of him hereafter; he having been crucified and slain for us in the body of his flesh, which he had assumed into personal union with himself; and which he raised again to an immortal life of blessedness and glory by his own divine power, * together

NOTE.

* By *the Spirit* some understand *Christ's divine nature*, and others *the Holy Spirit*.

gether with the inseparable quickening agency of the Holy Spirit.

19 By which also he went and preached unto the spirits in prison :

19 By which Spirit, as then existing, and acting together with, and from him, he, going in a way of special operation and manifestation to the old world before the flood, preached repentance and reformation, and the righteousness of faith * by the ministry of *Noah*, by whom he preached to that wicked people, who then lived upon earth, but whose souls are now shut up in the prison of hell, there to abide for ever, for their provoking iniquities. (*Matth.* v. 25, 26. and 2 *Pet.* ii. 4, 5.)

20 Which sometimes were disobedient, when once the long suffering of God waited in the days of Noah, while the ark was a preparing, wherein few, that is, eight souls, were saved by water.

20 Who formerly disbelieved, rebelled against, and obstinately refused to obey the solemn admonitions, which that preacher of righteousness gave them ; and would not attend to, and comply with those strivings of the Spirit with them therein, which, through the patience and long forbearance of God's mercy, were continued to them for the space of an hundred and twenty years, (*Gen.* vi. 3.) while *Noah*, being warned of God, and believing what he had told him about the destruction of that wicked generation, (*Heb.* xi. 7.) was preparing materials, and putting them together to make the ark, which was likewise a practical sermon to them all along, till the time that the flood came upon them ; in which ark, that eminent type of Christ, a very small number of believers, even *Noah*, his wife, and three sons and their wives, to the amount of eight persons only, escaped the impending destruction from, and were saved out of the water †, which lifted up the ark upon its surface, while all the rest of that ungodly world were swallowed up in the deluge, as all impenitent and unbelieving sinners will be in the more dreadful floods of divine wrath at the last day.

21 Answerable

NOTES.

rit, the last of which seems to me to be most directly intended, if compared with *Gen.* vi. 3. which the two following verses here, I think, refer to. However, as I would not positively determine against the former sense, both are included in the paraphrase, that the reader may take his choice.

* *Noah* may well be supposed to have preached, among other things, *the righteousness of faith in the Messiah*, for justification ; since the *ark*, which he was preparing for the safety of himself and family, was a significant type of salvation by Jesus Christ ; and *Noah* is called *a preacher of righteousness*, (2 Pet. ii. 5.) and is said to have been an *heir of the righteousness of faith.* (Heb. xi. 7.)

† I am inclined to think, with Mr. *Pyle*, that *by water* (δι' ὑδατος) may be more naturally understood to mean *from* or *out of the water*, according to a like sense, in which the preposition (δια) is to be taken in 1 *Cor.* iii. 15. which speaks of being saved so as *by fire.* (δια πυρος) And so it was *the ark*, and the safety of those which were in it, and not *the water*, that prefigured the gospel salvation in Christ, as signified by *baptism*, by means of which, when the thing signified by it is found in us, through faith in him, we are saved, as the apostle explains it in the next verse.

21 The like figure, whereunto, *even* baptism, doth also now save us, (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience towards God) by the resurrection of Jesus Christ:

21 Answerable to this temporal salvation in the ark from the flood, by means of the waters bearing it up, we now have salvation in Christ from sin and wrath, by means of the gospel-ordinance of baptism, which in a sense may be called its antitype: (ἀντίτυπον) Not that a bare external administration of it, in applying water to the body, as though *that* were to wash away its defilement, is of any avail of itself for this spiritual purpose; but all its efficacy lies in what is signified by it, as the purification of the heart was by circumcision in the flesh; and as it is a solemn obligation upon conscience to return a suitable answer to its demands of obedience to God, we having been therein devoted to the Father, and the Son, and the Holy Ghost, in whose name, as the one and only true God, we were baptized: (*Matth.* xxviii. 19.) And we are made partakers of this salvation, and thus restipulate to God, according to our baptismal engagements, through faith in the resurrection of our Saviour Jesus Christ, as he *was delivered for our offences, and raised again for our justification;* (Rom. iv. 25.) as also for quickening us from the death of sin to the life of righteousness in this world, (*Rom.* vi. 3,—6.) and raising us up, soul and body, to eternal life in the world to come, that we may live in glory with him.

22 Who is gone into heaven, and is on the right hand of God; angels, and authorities, and powers being made subject unto him.

22 Who, as the pledge, earnest, evidence, and security of it, and as our forerunner, is ascended in his risen body to heaven; and is now enthroned with the most eminent dignity and honour at the right hand of the Majesty on high; (see the note on *Acts* vii. 55.) and is invested with all authority in heaven and earth; the good and evil angels of every rank, and all the rulers and potentates of this world, being placed in an absolute subjection to him, that he may order and govern, commission or restrain them, and make them one way or other subserve his own and his Father's glory, and the good of his people, as he is *head over all things to the church.* (Eph. i. 21, 22.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

When believing wives, like *Sarah*, *Abraham*'s consort, are cloathed with, and more solicitous about the inward ornaments of the never-fading charms of modesty, meekness, and humility, from a principle of trust in God, than about the deckings of rich and splendid attire; and when they pay a respectful subjection to their own husbands in all lawful things, how amiable is their character! How acceptable to God, and winning upon even such husbands as disregard his word! And with what honour, humanity, and tenderness, under all their infirmities, should believing husbands treat them, that they may live together as co-heirs of the grace of life, and their prayers may not be hindered!——*Personal* as well as *relative* duties are incumbent on all the disciples of Jesus. They should be as harmonious, as possible, in important sentiment, and mutual affection; and should be compassionate, kind, and courteous towards all men; never retaliating injuries, or opprobrious language,

but rather wishing all good even to those who use them ill, as knowing that this is a duty to which they are called, in order to their own inheriting a blessing. And O how necessary is it for their present peace and comfort, to refrain from all evil in word and deed, and to pursue the good of others, and the things that make for peace! Who can find in his heart to hurt such an inoffensive, generous, and benevolent Christian, or can compass his eternal ruin! There is a natural tendency in his engaging behaviour to make his passage easy through this world; and God himself has a special care of him, to guard him from mischief, and shew him favour; and to hear his cries in distress, and pour confusion upon his enemies. If he suffers for righteousness sake, he need not be terrified at what his persecutors can threaten, or do against him; but should be ready to give an account, with modesty and reverence, of the grounds of his Christian hope, on all proper occasions; and ought to display its happy influence upon him, in constantly maintaining a good conscience and holy conversation, by the grace of God, to the silencing and shaming of all that would invidiously slander him. And O how much better is it to suffer in a good, than in a bad cause! And how chearfully should believers submit to the greatest hardships, that by divine permission, may befal them! To animate them hereunto, let them consider that the holy Jesus willingly suffered in his human nature the most terrible death of the cross in their room and stead, to make atonement for their sins, and bring them to God and glory; and that he was raised again by the Divine Spirit, and is now exalted at the Father's right hand in heaven, with full authority over all angels, men and devils, and every rank of creatures, to restrain or employ them as may be most for the security and happiness of his people. And O how great is his salvation, which is signified by the ordinance of baptism! But it really belongs only to those, whose hearts, as purified by faith, correspond to the meaning and obligation of that sacred sign, is a sort of antitype to *that* which *Noah* and his family had in the ark. Disobedient sinners shall indeed perish, like the ungodly world, with whom Christ strove by his Spirit in the warnings that were given them by *Noah*'s ministry, with all long-suffering for an hundred and twenty years together, who now, for their impenitence and unbelief, are shut up in an eternal hell, as the most doleful of all prisons: But they who believe in the risen Saviour, be they fewer or more, shall, by virtue derived from him, be raised to a blissful immortality, and dwell with him for ever in heaven. O what a sweet support and comfort are these thoughts to all suffering saints under the heaviest tribulations, which they may be called to endure for his sake!

CHAP. IV.

The apostle improves the consideration of Christian sufferings, for purity and holiness in heart and life, 1,—6. *and of the approaching dissolution of the* Jewish *state, for sobriety, watchfulness, prayer, and mutual love, and for a faithful discharge of religious trusts,* 7, —11. *and cautions believers against exposing themselves to punishments for their own faults; but encourages them to rejoice and glory in reproaches and sufferings for Christ, instead of being surprised or dismayed at them; and to commit their souls, in a course of well-doing, to the care of a faithful God,* 12,—19.

TEXT.

FOrasmuch then as Christ hath suffered for us in the flesh, arm yourselves likewise with the same mind: for he that hath suffered in the flesh, hath

PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to return from the digression about Christ's preaching in the ministry of *Noah*, &c. (*chap.* iii. 19,—22.) Since the immaculate Jesus has so patiently and extremely suffered in his body for us, who believe in him, that he might expiate our sins, (*chap.* iii. 18.) and now no longer bears them, as he did before, (*chap.* ii. 24.) Let this fortify you against impatience

hath ceased from sin;

patience and faintings under your trials for his sake, that ye may be armed against them by a holy submission and intrepidity of spirit, after his noble and endearing example: For whoever has *crucified the old man, the body of sin*, or *the flesh with its affections and lusts*, according to the design, and in virtue of the death of Christ, (*Rom.* vi. 6. and *Gal.* v. 24.) * and has willingly and patiently suffered fiery trials for his sake, and in conformity to him, (*ver.* 12, 13.) in his mortal body; such a Christian has renounced all his former sinful principles and practices, is crucified to them, utterly disallows and abhors them, and with full purpose of heart has departed from them;

2 That he no longer should live the rest of *his* time in the flesh, to the lusts of men, but to the will of God.

2 That he may no longer go on, as formerly, to spend the remainder of his days in the body at an ungodly and immoral rate, in a course of life that is agreeable to the corrupt affections and desires of carnal men, but in all holy dispositions, designs, and conversation, according to the will and command of God, as may be most for his glory, and well-pleasing in his sight.

3 For the time past of our life may suffice us to have wrought the will of the Gentiles, when we walked in lasciviousness, lusts, excess of wine, revellings, banquetings, and abominable idolatries.

3 For we have too long wasted the precious hours of life already, and ought to think it more than enough, that we have employed them in compliances with the wicked inclinations and practices of our heathen neighbours, to whom we, and especially the *Gentile*-converts amongst us, conformed ourselves; when in our state of unregeneracy, we indulged, and persisted in wanton dalliances, as expressed by our looks, words, and gestures; in criminal propensions and pursuits after unlawful embraces; in immoderate drinking of wine, or other strong liquors; in gormandizings (Κωμοις) and riotings; in luxurious carousings; and in idolatrous worship, which is not only unlawful and detestable in itself, but also on account of the shameful lewdness, gluttony, drunkenness, and other vices that attended it, particularly among the heathens:

4 Wherein they think it strange that you run not with them to the same excess of riot, speaking evil of *you*:

4 With respect to which, they wonder what is come to you, that ye have now so unexpectedly forsaken their company, and do not still run along with them into the same dissolute and profuse indulgences to all manner of luxury and intemperance, as ye were wont, and they continue to do with guilty pleasure, and without remorse: And hereupon they vilify you and your religion, as though it has made you the most

NOTE.

* As *the flesh* is sometimes taken, in a literal sense, for *the body*; and at others, in a figurative sense, for *the corruption of human nature*, (see the note on *Gal.* v. 19.) *He that has suffered in the flesh*, may be considered in either of those views, as in the paraphrase; one or other of which seems more natural to me than any that I have met with.

most unsociable, stiff, precise, and humourſome creatures, that are not fit for common ſociety, and ought to be the objects of their contempt and ſcorn.

5 Who shall give account to him that is ready to judge the quick and the dead.

5 Who, whatever they think of the matter now, ſhall moſt certainly be called to a ſtrict account for all *their ungodly deeds and hard ſpeeches;* (Jude, *ver.* 15.) and muſt anſwer for them to that great Lord, on whom all their reproaches of you for his ſake ultimately fall; and who has all authority, and will ere long appear, to paſs and execute a deciſive ſentence upon the whole world, even upon all that ſhall be living on the earth, and that ſhall be found among the dead and raiſed again, at the laſt day, to the joy of the ſaints and terror of his enemies. (*John* v. 27,—29.)

6 For, for this cauſe was the goſpel preached alſo to them that are dead, that they might be judged according to men in the fleſh, but live according to God in the Spirit.

6 For this is the end for which the goſpel was preached to thoſe believers, who are now *the dead in Chriſt*, (1 Theſſ. iv. 16.) as well as to thoſe who are ſtill living upon earth, that they, by a divine power attending it, being thoroughly mortified and dead to their former ſinful inclinations and courſes of life, might be eventually cenſured and condemned, and even put to death, for their novel and unſociable principles and behaviour, as being judged according to the dictates of corrupt nature, and of mere natural men; but that they might really live after a ſpiritual and joyful manner, by a holy conformity to the image and will of God in their renewed ſouls, as being quickened from the death of ſin to the life of righteouſneſs, and aſſiſted by his Spirit, to do the things that are pleaſing in his ſight through Jeſus Chriſt; and might at laſt be raiſed up to a glorious and immortal life, *by his Spirit that dwells in them.* (Rom. viii. 11.)

7 But the end of all things is at hand: be ye therefore ſober, and watch unto prayer.

7 But conſider, for your encouragement and caution under preſent and future trials, that all the ſcenes, which lie before you in this world, will ſoon be over and gone: The *Jewiſh* ſtate and nation, temple, city and worſhip, will quickly come to their final period, according to our bleſſed Lord's prediction; (*Luke* xix. 43, 44.) the death of every one of you is near at hand; yea, and in compariſon with eternity, the day is drawing on a-pace, when the earth and all things in it ſhall be diſſolved. (2 *Pet.* iii. 10, 11.) It therefore greatly behoves you, in this view and proſpect, to be wiſe, ſober, and temperate in all things relating to your paſſions, appetites, and enjoyments; and to be conſtantly upon your watch againſt temptations, and all the workings of indwelling corruption, and for all aſſiſtances of the Spirit, that ye may be in a right frame for prayer, and

may

may readily fall in with all occasional as well as stated seasons of addressing the throne of grace for every needful blessing, and particularly for preservation from sin, and from troubles, or for succour under them, and a sanctified use of them, and deliverance in due time out of them all.

8 And above all things have fervent charity among yourselves; for charity shall cover the multitude of sins.

8 And let it be your governing concern to cultivate a warm, brotherly, and cordial affection one towards another, (*Rom.* xii. 9, 10.) especially in perilous days, as being influenced to it by the superlative love of God in Christ to you: For as he, in the greatness of his love, has freely forgiven and covered all your trespasses, that none of them may be brought into judgment against you; (*Eph.* iv. 32.) so a sincere and ardent love in you towards one another for Christ's sake, and in obedience to his command, will inspire you with a forgiving temper toward your brethren, and hide their numerous failings from your own resentment, that ye may kindly overlook, and be careful to conceal them from, instead of exposing them to others. (1 *Cor.* xiii. 4,—7.)

9 Use hospitality one to another without grudging.

9 As another token of love, be ready to exercise all manner of kindness, and to give all seasonable assistances one towards another, and particularly in entertaining religious strangers, who travel abroad for spreading the gospel, or suffer loss for Christ, or are forced to skulk about, through the violence of the times, or are cast among you by any providence; chearfully receive, and generously relieve such as these, without reluctance, or thinking much at the expence.

10 As every man hath received the gift, *even so* minister the same one to another, as good stewards of the manifold grace of God.

10 And as all talents for *public* offices, as well as private capacities of usefulness in the church, are the free gift of God, let every one, that is favoured with them, be careful to employ them, in proportion to what he has received, for the advantage and edification one of another, as persons entrusted with, and accountable to their great Lord and Master for the various gifts and endowments which he has graciously bestowed upon them, that they may manage them with wisdom and faithfulness, like honourable stewards, (καλοι οικονομοι) for the good of the church, for which he gave them.

11 If any man speak, *let him speak* as the oracles of God; if any man minister, *let him do it* as of the ability which God giveth: that God

11 If any one be called to the office of *preaching*, let him attend to the sacred writings of divine revelation, that he may deliver nothing but what is agreeable to them, and may faithfully declare the mind and will of God, according to them, in such a serious, solemn and reverential, fervent, spiritual and holy manner, as becomes them: If another be called

to

God in all things may be glorified through Jesus Christ, to whom be praise and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

to the office of a *deacon*, * to collect, take care of, and distribute the church's stock, for the relief of the poor, the maintenance of the ministry, and defraying the necessary expences of divine ordinances, let him attend to his charge with all fidelity, prudence, tenderness, and diligence, according to the ability of body and mind that God has furnished him with, and according to the proportion of contributions and of the cases committed to his care; to the end that all the temporal as well as spiritual affairs of the church may be conducted in such a manner as shall be most for the glory of God, and the magnifying of his great name, with such thanksgivings and praises from the dispensers and receivers of the benefit, as are acceptable to him, through the mediation, merit, and advocacy of Jesus Christ, to whom, and to the Father through him, may all grateful acknowledgments and honours be paid, and universal power, authority, and dominion ascribed, to the endless ages of eternity! In testimony of our earnest desire and joyful assurance of its being so, let us unanimously join our *Amen.*

12 Beloved, think it not strange concerning the fiery trial, which is to try you, as though some strange thing happened unto you:

12 My dear suffering brethren, while ye reflect on the imperfection of your present state, and the depravity of mankind, which fills their hearts with enmity to God and godliness, and on our Lord's forewarning you, that in the world ye shall have tribulation, but shall have peace in him, who has overcome the world, (*John* xvi. 33.) ye ought not to be discouraged or surprised at the severest persecutions that can befal you, which, in allusion to the approaching conflagration of *Jerusalem*, may be called fiery trials; and which, as they are designed of God, not to destroy, but to refine you, are like a furnace to try the sincerity of, and purify your graces, and purge away your dross, even all your sin. (*Is.* i. 25. and xxvii. 9. and xlviii. 10.) I entreat you not to be dismayed at them, as though they were unexpected and uncommon things, and foreign to the methods of God's love to his own dear children; and as though ye were dealt hardly with in being called to suffer them.

13 But rejoice in as much as ye are partakers of Christ's sufferings; that when his glory shall be revealed,

13 But rather reckon upon them, think of them, and stand prepared to meet them, with holy joy; for as much as your Lord and Saviour sympathizes with you in all your afflictions, and counts them his own; (*Mat.* xxv. 40, 45. and *Acts* ix. 4.) and ye therein are

NOTE.

* *If any man minister*, or *deaconize*, (διακονει) seems most immediately to relate to the *deacon*'s office, in distinction from that of public preaching; (see the notes on *Acts* vi. 2. and *Rom.* xii. 7.) though they also may be extended, one to Christian conference, and the other to charitable contributions, in private capacities.

ed, ye may be glad alſo with exceeding joy.

are made conformable to his ſufferings for you, to the end that when he ſhall appear in all his glory at the laſt day, ye may rejoice with exultation and triumph in, and together with him. (*Rom.* viii. 17. *Col.* iii. 4. and 2 *Tim.* ii. 12.)

14 If ye be reproached for the name of Chriſt, happy *are ye:* for the ſpirit of glory, and of God reſteth upon you: on their part he is evil ſpoken of, but on your part he is glorified.

14 If ye be upbraided and vilified for your holy profeſſion of Chriſt's name, and yet take it patiently, and even rejoice in it, this is a bleſſed token of your union and communion with him, and will, through his merit and grace, turn to your own richeſt account. For the Spirit of God, who, as a divine perſon, may well be ſtyled *the Spirit of glory*, as the Father and Son are called *the Father of glory*, and *the Lord of glory;* (Eph. i. 17. and 1 Cor. ii. 8. ſee the note there) they all being undividedly one in nature, as *the God of glory;* (Pſ. xxix. 3. and Acts vii. 2.) This glorious Spirit therein eminently bears witneſs to you, and is evidently preſent, in a way of gracious and influential abode with you, to ſupport and comfort you under all revilings and ſufferings, to carry you with honour through them, and bring you off glorioufly at the end of them; and to be himſelf your earneſt and pledge of the eternal glory, to which he will conduct you. On the ſide of your perſecuting enemies, Chriſt and his offices, * as well as the Spirit and his operations, are blaſphemed; (βλασφημειται) and their reproaches of you aim at, and ultimately fall upon him, for whoſe ſake they are caſt upon you: But on your ſide, honour redounds to his glorious name, by your faith and patience, and by your bravely owning and confeſſing him in your ſufferings, and in your praiſes.

15 But let none of you ſuffer as a murderer, or *as* a thief, or *as* an evil-doer, or *as* a buſy-body in other men's matters.

15 But let me caution you to take heed, that none of you bring troubles upon himſelf for any crimes of his own, which deſerve, and would juſtly expoſe him to them; as for inſtance, let none of you render himſelf obnoxious, not only to the anger of God, but to the laſh of the civil government, as chargeable with murderous, or with thieviſh deſigns and practices; or as guilty of ſeditious, or any other injurious and unlawful courſes; or as an idle pragmatical perſon, who neglects his own buſineſs, and takes upon him to intrude into, and act the part of a buſy inſpector, (αλλοτριοεπισκοπος) and governor of the conſciences, or ſecular affairs of other people, that do not belong to him;

NOTE.

* *He is evil ſpoken of*, and *he is glorified*, may, by the conſtruction, refer either to *Chriſt*, or to *the Spirit*, and therefore, the paraphraſe turns our thoughts to both; though I moſt incline to take it as referring to Chriſt, who frequently ſpeaks of the reproaches, contempt, hatred and perſecutions of his diſciples for his ſake, as levelled againſt, and terminating upon himſelf.

him; and to meddle with their concerns, which he has nothing to do with, and has no right to pry into, or interest himself in.

16 Yet if *any man suffer* as a Christian let him not be ashamed; but let him glorify God on this behalf.

16 But (δε) if any one bear with a Christian spirit the greatest indignities, reproaches and cruelties, merely on account of his profession of Christ, and doing the duties belonging to it, he has no cause, nor ought he to look upon them as a real disgrace, or as what he need be ashamed of: But, on the contrary, he should esteem them as an honour conferred upon him, which he may well glory in, and glorify God for, with a chearful submission to his will, and the disposals of his over-ruling providence, who *counts him worthy to suffer shame for the name of Christ*, (Acts v. 41.) and enables him to undergo false imputations, and the sharpest trials, in such a manner, as may be most to the honour and praise of his Lord and Saviour.

17 For the time *is come* that judgment must begin at the house of God: and if it first *begin* at us, what shall the end *be* of them that obey not the gospel of God?

17 For the time is just now at hand, when not only the temple, God's ancient habitation at *Jerusalem*, shall be laid waste, in his righteous judgment, according to Christ's prediction; (*Luke* xxi. 6.) but his New Testament-church, which was typified by that house of God, and in which he dwells in a more spiritual manner, shall begin to be most remarkably visited with trying dispensations of providence for their correction and amendment, though for the elect's sake those days of tribulation shall be shortened: (*Mat.* xxiv. 9, 21, 22.) And if such severe discipline begin first of all to be exercised on us, who are *the habitation of God through the Spirit*, (Eph. ii. 22.) even as his judgments of old *began at his sanctuary*, (Ezek. ix. 6.) what can be expected, but that his wrath should go forth to the utmost extremity against the wicked and ungodly, who, through their obstinacy and unbelief, disregard and reject the gospel of the ever blessed God, as it soon will, in a most dreadful manner, against the whole body of the refractory Jews?

18 And if the righteous scarcely be saved, where shall the ungodly and the sinner appear?

18 And if, in these perilous times, they who are in a state of favour with God through faith in the righteousness of Christ, and are renewed and sanctified by his Spirit unto holy obedience, shall have a narrow, though sure escape, by the interpositions of divine providence and grace, like persons *saved as by fire*, (1 Cor. iii. 15.) and like *Paul* and his company, who scarcely, or *with much ado*, (μολις) *came at the boat* for their preservation; (*Acts* xxvii. 16.) * how dismal must the condition

NOTE.

* *The salvation*, here spoken of, seems from the whole current of the context to be, mostly at least, of a *temporal* nature: For the principal design of this chapter is to prepare and fortify believers against the severest sufferings for Christ, and the dreadful calamities that were coming upon the *Jewish* church and state

condition of thoſe impenitent and unbelieving ſinners be, who perſiſt in their impieties and iniquities, and are out of favour with God, and fit fuel for his wrath? Where can they find any retreat for ſafety? Where ſhall they dare to lift up their guilty heads, or be able to appear? Or where can they expect, and where muſt they be obliged to appear? Their end muſt certainly be for ever inexpreſſibly miſerable; there can be no hiding-place for them, when God ſhall come to deal in righteouſneſs with them.

19 Wherefore, let them that ſuffer according to the will of God, commit the keeping of their ſouls *to him* in well doing, as unto a faithful Creator.

19 Upon the whole therefore, in reflection upon theſe awful events, which carry ſo much encouragement to you as his people, and ſo much terror to his and your enemies, let them who endure perſecutions and afflictions under the over-ruling providence of God, according to his appointment, and who bear them, by the aſſiſtance of his Spirit, in ſuch a manner as is pleaſing to him, commit their lives and ſouls, and all their concerns, for time and eternity, by faith to him, in a courſe of holy walking with him, and of doing good to friends and enemies, and to all about them; truſting in him through Jeſus Chriſt, as faithful to his promiſes of ſafety and happineſs in the worſt of times, and as the Almighty Creator and Preſerver, who is able to perform them.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How animating is a conſideration of the extremity and deſign of Chriſt's ſufferings to determine us againſt all compliances with the ſenſual indulgences of men of carnal minds; and to be conformable to the holy will of God! Do our old companions wonder at, and revile us, for not running any longer, as we were wont, into the ſame exceſs of riot with them? Let both parties conſider, that every one muſt give an account of his own behaviour, whether good or bad, to the great Judge of all, who will determine in favour of thoſe that are quickened from ſpiritual death by means of the goſpel, which indeed brings them under the cenſure of men that judge according to the fleſh; but leads them into a life of holineſs, according to the will of God, by the power of his Spirit. How ſhould the near approach of tribulations and death excite us to ſobriety, watchfulneſs, and prayer, to all exerciſes of brotherly love and hoſpitality, and to a faithful improvement, like good ſtewards of the manifold gifts and talents, in public or private capacities, which God in his free favour has given us, that they may be employed to his glory through Jeſus Chriſt! Let Chriſtians take heed that they never bring ſufferings on themſelves, by their own ſinful and injurious behaviour; or by prying and intruding like buſy-bodies, into other people's affairs, inſtead of minding their own. But as we, who would cleave unto the Lord, may expect to meet with fiery trials for his ſake, we ought not to be ſurprized, or affrighted at them; but ſhould rather re-

NOTE.

ſtate at the conflagration of *Jeruſalem*, which it is ſuppoſed was then within about ſix or ſeven years at hand; and, in alluſion to which, the calamities of thoſe days are called *fiery trials*, and *the end of all things is* ſaid to be *at hand*. (ver. 7, 12.) But if we make it refer to a *ſpiritual and eternal ſalvation*, it is to be underſtood only of the extreme difficulties, troubles, ſufferings, and apparent dangers, through which the righteous were to paſs in their way to heaven, and not of any real hazard, as to the event, with reſpect to the purpoſe, promiſe and power of God for accompliſhing it.

joice and glory in them, as an honour put upon us, while we are called and enabled to glorify him, by bearing them in an honourable manner, through the Spirit of glory's resting upon us, and making us conformable to Christ in his sufferings, that we may triumph with exceeding joy, when he shall appear in all his glory, and we shall be glorified together with him. But if the righteous themselves must pass through great tribulations, for their correction and amendment, and God begin first in an awful manner with them, that are his habitation through the Spirit, and they narrowly escape out of imminent dangers, how dreadful must the case of the sinner and ungodly be, who rejects the gospel through unbelief! And where can they appear with safety and comfort? Their ruin must be unavoidable and insupportable. As ever therefore we would not perish with them, may we, in a way of well-doing, commit our lives and souls by faith, under all afflictions, to the care of that God, who is faithful to his promises, and is able to save his creatures, and to perform all things for them that trust in him.

CHAP. V.

The apostle exhorts and encourages elders to be chearful, disinterested and humble, in a faithful discharge of their office, 1,—4. *Directs younger Christians to submit to their elders, yea, all of them one to another; and to yield, with humility and patience, to the hand of God, and cast all their care on him, and to be sober, watchful, and stedfast in the faith against all the temptations of the devil,* 5,—9. *And then prays for their growth and establishment; and concludes with salutations, and a benediction,* 10,—14.

TEXT.

THE elders which are among you, I exhort, who am also an elder, and a witness of the sufferings of Christ, and also a partaker of the glory that shall be revealed.

PARAPHRASE.

AS to those that are spiritual guides or pastors, chosen out of, and residing in your several churches, and may be called *elders*, because ministers of mature age and standing are ordinarily the most proper to be put into that sacred office; I would direct my exhortation to such, and equally bind it upon my own conscience, as being myself not a lord and master *, but a fellow-elder and servant of Christ, though honoured with the apostolic character: (2 *Epist.* i. 1.) And that they may pay the greater regard to what I am going to urge upon them, let them consider that I was an eye-witness of the bitter agonies and sufferings of Christ in soul and body, (*Mark* xiv. 33, &c. and 54, &c.) and of their glorious issues in his resurrection from the dead; (*Acts* iii. 15.) and am now bold to bear my testimony to them, and to their important design, by preaching, and by all manner of sufferings for his sake, and after his example, even at the peril

NOTE.

* This way of the apostle *Peter*'s address, saying, I *exhort or entreat, who am also a fellow-elder,* (παρακαλω ὁ συμπρεσβυτερος) is quite different from the high tone of *the Pope*, who, under pretence of being *Peter*'s successor, and *head* of the church, *commands* with sovereign authority, like *a lord*, and not a fellow-elder, which all the apostles were with other elders, though every elder was not an apostle.

peril of my life: And as his sufferings turn to my account, so I have an earnest of, and (as I am well assured) shall be admitted to a blessed communion with him in the glory which he has purchased by his death, and taken possession of, as my head, representative, and forerunner; and which will be openly and fully manifested at his second appearing, when *he shall come to be glorified in his saints, and admired in all them that believe.* (2 Thess. i. 10.)

2 Feed the flock of God which is among you, taking the oversight *thereof*, not by constraint, but willingly; not for filthy lucre, but of a ready mind;

2 Let those of you who are set over the several churches in the Lord, to which ye are related, see to it, that, as *pastors after his own heart, ye feed his people with knowledge and understanding*, (Jer. iii. 15.) even his lambs and his sheep, (*John* xxi. 15, 16.) and that (ποιμανατε) ye exercise a holy discipline, according to his word, in governing the *church of God, which he*, in his incarnate state, *purchased with his own blood*, (Acts xx. 28.) and has committed, as his flock, to your pastoral care under him, as *the chief Shepherd*: (ver. 4.) Act the part of good bishops * in personally inspecting their principles, temper, and conduct, and in looking after all their spiritual concerns with wisdom and meekness, fidelity, watchfulness and care; and let this be done, not by any force upon your inclinations, or by fear of shame among men, in case of neglect, but with freedom and delight, as matter of choice; not, like the false teachers, (*Tit.* i. 11.) with mercenary views to worldly advantages, which are sordid gains, and defiling to the conscience, and to the sacred office of him who makes them his governing end; but with a heart that is ready to engage in this delightful service, purely for the honour of Christ and the good of souls.

3 Neither as being lords over *God's* heritage, but being ensamples to the flock.

3 Nor let your important trust be managed with ambitious views of honour to yourselves, or in an imperious, haughty, domineering manner, as though ye were lords and masters, that have dominion over the faith and consciences of the people of God's choice, whom, like *Israel* of old, (*Deut.* iv. 20. and ix. 29.) he has made his peculiar inheritance, as it were by lot; and who

NOTE.

* These *elders* were to *bishop* it, (επισκοπειν) or to exercise the office of *bishops* over the flock; (see the note on *Acts* xx 17) which shews that, though they were only ordinary pastors, they were the Christian *bishops* of the apostolic age, to fulfil all the duties of that office, which is one and the same in those that are spoken of as *pastors* or *elders*, who are to feed and govern the flock, which is called God's *heritage* or *clergy*, (ver. 3.) as distinguished from *pastors*; and these officers are at other times described as *elders*, that are to behave with gravity and prudence, like aged and experienced men; and at others, as *bishops*, that are to take the over sight of the church: And so all these are only different denominations, taken from such like considerations of the same office. to set out the nature and extent of their charge.

who may be considered as *the clergy*, (των κληρων) which he has set apart for himself, with a distinction from the rest of mankind: But take care to set a good example of humility, self-denial, and all holy conversation and godliness, to the whole company of believers under your charge, that they may be induced to follow your steps. (See 1 *Tim.* iv. 12.)

4 And when the chief Shepherd shall appear, ye shall receive a crown of glory that fadeth not away.

4 And, for your encouragement hereunto, always bear in mind, that when *the great Shepherd of the sheep*, (Heb. xiii. 20.) who has purchased them by his blood, and secures them by his power and grace, under whom ye act, and to whom ye are accountable, shall appear on the throne of his glory to gather all nations before him, and shall set his sheep at his right-hand, and pronounce them the blessed of his Father, &c. (*Matth.* xxv. 31,—34.) Then ye, who are faithful to your trust, shall receive an infinitely better reward, than all the riches of this world, or than the conquerer's withering garland of bays, olive, and flowers in the *Grecian* games. It shall be more durable and flourishing than (αμαραντινον) a crown made of the flowers of *amarinth*, which it is said, never fade; even an immortal crown of honour and glory, which the Lord will graciously award unto you, as an uncorruptible and undefiled inheritance, that never fades or abates in worth or lustre. (*Chap.* i. 4.)

5 Likewise, ye younger, submit yourselves unto the elder: yea, all *of you* be subject one to another, and be clothed with humility: for God resisteth the proud, and giveth grace to the humble.

5 My exhortation, in like manner, to those of you that are private church members, consisting mostly of the younger sort of Christians, * as also to inferiors of every character, is, that ye be attentive and submissive to the admonitions, cautions, and reproofs of those that are of more advanced years, wisdom, experience, and station; and particularly to those that are elders by office, as set over you in the Lord; that ye treat their persons, characters, and instructions, as far as they are agreeable to the word of God, with due esteem and reverence: Yea, that all of you, in whatever relation ye stand, behave with decency and respect one towards another. Do not be stiff and abounding in your own sense;

NOTE.

* *Elder* and *younger* are sometimes used to signify persons of *different age*, as in 1 *Tim.* v. 1. (see the note there) and at others, *younger* is a denomination of *inferiors* in distinction from *superiors*, as in *Luke* xxii. 26. But at other times, *elders* is a title of *office*, the same with *bishops* or *pastors*; and that it is to be so understood, *ver.* 1. is evident from *the work*, that the apostle exhorts them to in the following verses, which is peculiar to persons of that character; who also seem to be principally intended by *the elder* in this verse, which represents the duty of the people toward them, in a beautiful antithesis by the word *likewise*. (ομοιως) But the *younger*, as far as I find, is never used as a term of *office*; and that it is not to be taken in any such sense here, appears from there being nothing said to them that relates to *office-work*, but only such things as are common to them and all private Christians.

ſenſe; but hearken to ſolid arguments and kind reproofs, from whomſoever they come; and yield one to another, as far as is conſiſtent with your ſeveral ranks and ſituations in the church, and in the natural and civil life: And, to make theſe duties the more eaſy and pleaſant to you, ſee that ye be endued with unfeigned humility, and as it were covered all over with it, as a beautiful ornament to add a viſible luſtre to all your other graces, like a ſhining upper garment that ſpreads over all the reſt, and hides their defects. And to induce you to cultivate this amiable grace, remember that a haughty ſpirit is ſo uncreaturely and unchriſtian-like, ſo abſolutely unbecoming ſinful mortals, and ſo contrary to your relation to God, and entire dependence upon him, that he ſets himſelf, as it were in battle-array, (ἀντιτάσσεται) againſt the proud in heart, and has them in the utmoſt abhorrence; but (δὲ) ſhews favour, and gives a rich increaſe of all grace, to humble ſouls, which are his delight. (See *Prov.* iii. 34. and the paraphraſe on *James* iv. 6.)

6 Humble yourſelves therefore, under the mighty hand of God, that he may exalt you in due time:

6 Conſidering therefore what a great God ye have to do with; how entirely ye are at his diſpoſal, and as nothing before him; how able he is to humble the proud, and exalt the lowly in heart; and what terrible judgments he is about to execute in the way of his providence, as an emblem of much greater ſtill in the world to come, yield yourſelves up to his almighty power, and his ſovereign and holy will, under all the ſufferings and afflictions which he orders for your trial: Bow under his rebukes, that he, as a tender father, who has gained his wiſe and gracious end by his chaſtenings, may have compaſſion upon you, and in his time (which is always the fitteſt) may lift you up above all tribulations, and advance you to a proſperous ſtate in this world, (if that ſhall be beſt for you) or, at fartheſt, to all the honours and delights of the world to come.

7 Caſting all your care upon him, for he careth for you.

7 In the mean while, whatever be the diſtreſſing burdens, or anxieties, ſolicitude, fears, and cares, relating to yourſelves, or families and friends, or to the cauſe and intereſt of Chriſt, that perplex, cut, and wound your ſouls, (πασαν την μεριμναν) commit them all, in the uſe of proper means, by faith and prayer, to the Lord, relying on his power and goodneſs for ſeaſonable relief: For he has all your concerns, ſpiritual and temporal, at heart, and will ſuſtain you; (*Pſal.* lv. 22.) he will pity, ſuccour, ſtrengthen, and comfort you under, and in his time and way will eaſe you of, and give a happy iſſue to all your troubles in your eternal ſalvation.

8 Amidſt

8 Be sober, be vigilant: because your adversary the devil, as a roaring lion walketh about seeking whom he may devour.

8 Amidst all the difficulties and dangers of your present state of warfare, (πήρατι) labour to maintain a wakeful and sober temper of mind, in modest thoughts of yourselves, and in moderating your affections and appetites towards earthly enjoyments; and to be watchful unto prayer, (*chap.* iv. 7.) and unto the performance of all the duties of your places, and against temptations that would draw you into sin and apostacy; (1 *Thess.* iii. 5.) because your busy and powerful adversary the devil, that accuser of the brethren, (*Rev.* xii. 10.) like a fierce, savage, and hungry lion, greedy of his prey, is indefatigably restless in his contrivances and endeavours, continually *going to and fro in the earth*, (Job i. 7.) to try how far he may be permitted, by persecutions, frauds, and evil suggestions, to wound, rend, and tear, and ruin immortal souls; though, blessed be God, he, being under Christ's controul, cannot compass his design of destroying all whom he would, or of plucking any one of the Redeemer's sheep out of his and his Father's hands. (*John* x. 28, 29.)

9 Whom resist stedfast in the faith knowing that the same afflictions are accomplished in your brethren, that are in the world.

9 As ever ye would overcome this grand adversary, and all his instruments, make a noble and courageous stand against him, by stedfastly maintaining the pure doctrine of faith and your holy profession of it, in a firm dependence on the power and grace of Christ to vanquish him; it being most of all important for this purpose to *take the shield of faith, wherewith ye shall be able to quench all the fiery darts of the wicked:* (Eph. vi. 16.) And that ye may not be disheartened in the combat, as though some strange thing happened to you, (*chap.* iv. 12.) remember that the like measure of sufferings, in conformity to Christ, are filled up (συμπεπλήρωται) and finished by your Christian brethren in all parts of the world, during their short abode in it; and as *no temptation has taken you, but such as is common to man;* so *God is faithful, who will make a way to escape, that ye may be able to bear it.* (1 Cor. x. 13.)

10 But the God of all grace, who hath called us unto his eternal glory by Christ Jesus, after that ye have suffered a while, make you perfect, stablish, strengthen, settle *you.*

10 Now as God, who is rich in mercy, and of his own mere favour is the fountain and giver of all grace, from first to last, suitable to every time of trial, has effectually called us by his word and Spirit to an inheritance of eternal glory, which he has promised to, and reserved in heaven for us, and will keep us unto the possession of, (*chap.* i. 4, 5.) through the merit and mediation of Jesus Christ; and as his grace is absolutely necessary to enable you to put my admonitions into practice, it is my earnest prayer, under these encouraging and endearing considerations

siderations of him, and in reflection on my own dreadful fall, when, being left to myself, I denied my Lord; (*Mark* xv. 68, 70, 71.) that after, and by means of your tribulations, which will soon be over, and are but *light affliction for a moment*, compared with the *exceeding and eternal weight of glory*, (2 Cor. iv. 17.) he would perfect all that concerns you, as to knowledge and practice; would establish you immoveably in the faith and hope, profession and holiness of the gospel; would *strengthen you with all might, according to his glorious power, unto all patience and long-suffering with joyfulness*; (Col. i. 11.) and would settle your souls, with unshaken peace, safety, and comfort, on that foundation which he has laid in *Sion*. (Chap. ii. 6.)

11 To him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever Amen.

11 To him, who is the glorious author of all the happiness that we have in hand, or in hope, and reversion, be chearfully ascribed, as is most due, all possible honour, majesty, might, and dominion, through all generations on earth, and to all eternity in heaven, *Amen*; so may it be, and so it shall, as well as ought to be.

12 By Silvanus a faithful brother unto you, (as I suppose) I have written briefly, exhorting, and testifying, that this is the true grace of God wherein ye stand.

12 Thus I have wrote a short epistle, and sent it to you by *Silvanus*, (see the note on *Acts* xv. 22.) whom I can recommend as a faithful brother in the work of the Lord, (ως λογιζομαι) as I reckon, upon good grounds, that he is, and will approve himself to be to you: And my design, in what I have wrote, is to exhort and encourage you to abide by the testimony I have herein given for the confirmation of your faith; assuring you that it is the true gospel of the grace of God, relating to salvation alone by Jesus Christ; in the doctrine, belief, and profession of which (στηκατε) ye have hitherto stood fast; and by means of which ye still maintain your ground, as I trust ye ever will continue to do, through grace, notwithstanding all the artifices and terrors of your enemies to bring you off from it.

13 The *church that is* at Babylon, elected together with

13 The believers that are gathered into a church-state, and ordinarily assemble for religious worship at * *Babylon*, where I now am, and that are to be look-

ed

NOTE.

* Some suppose that by *Babylon* is meant *Rome*, which in a figurative sense might be called mystical *Babylon*, as in *Rev.* xvii. 5. and xviii. 2. with a view to its future corruption, superstition, idolatry and oppressions under the *papacy*, when it would be as infamous for all abominations, as the ancient *Babylon* ever was. But *Calvin*, *Piscator*, *Pareus*, *Pearson*, and many others think, as I also do, that the apostle could have no reason to conceal *Rome* under this fictitious name, and that he being the apostle of the circumcision was probably at or near *Babylon*, either in *Chaldea*, or in *Egypt*, when he wrote this epistle; there being many converted *Jews* in those parts. (See Dr. *Lightfoot*'s sermon on this text in his works, Vol. II. p. 1141, &c.)

with *you* saluteth you, and *so doth* Marcus my son.

ed upon in a judgment of charity, as choice Christians, and as chosen of God to salvation together with yourselves, send their most affectionate and religious respects to you; and so doth *John Mark*, (Acts xii. 12.) who, at times, has served with me as a son in the work of the gospel, as well as was converted by my ministry, and is, like a son, exceeding dear to me.

14 Greet ye one another with a kiss of charity. Peace *be* with you all that are in Christ Jesus. Amen.

14 See to it that ye cultivate a cordial brotherly love one towards another; in token of which salute each other with a chaste and friendly kiss, according to the usual custom of Christians in their meetings together. (See the note on *Rom.* xvi. 16.) May all the blessings of the Lord, for present and everlasting happiness, abound towards all and every one of you, wheresoever ye be scattered, that bear a holy profession of Christ's name, and are supposed to be vitally united to him, as your only Head and Saviour! To testify my sincere desire and hope of this, I say, *Amen.*

RECOLLECTIONS.

With what an exemplary spirit, conversation, and humbleness of mind, free from haughty airs of lording it over God's heritage; and with what diligence, chearfulness and disinterested views, should Christian pastors inspect, feed, and govern the churches committed to their ministerial care by the great Shepherd of the sheep, who suffered for their redemption! They have the sweetest encouragement to be faithful, in hope of being partakers of, and crowned with glory, when he shall be revealed in all the grandeur of his second appearing. And how dutiful and becoming is it, that humility and respect run through the behaviour of their people to them, of inferiors to superiors, and of all believers, one towards another, in receiving holy admonitions! But especially, how ought every one to behave with an absolute, unreserved, and the lowest submission to the great God under his rebukes! He sets himself against the proud; but shews favour to the humble, and encourages them to cast all their solicitous cares and troubles upon him, who is the almighty God, and has a tender concern for them, and will exalt them in due season. And as the devil is a vigilant, cruel, and indefatigable enemy, like a formidable, ravaging, and hungry lion, seeking, if possible, to devour them, they ought to be constantly on their watch against him, and against all inordinate affections that would betray them into his hands; and to withstand and reject all his temptations, with a stedfast faith in Christ, to bring them off with victory and triumph over all the persecutions and troubles, which they and their brethren, in all places and ages, are exposed to; but which, comparatively speaking, are light afflictions, and of short continuance, and at furthest can be only during their uncertain residence in this present sinful world. But oh what absolute need is there of help from the God of all grace to fortify our souls against them, and to establish, strengthen, and settle us on Christ, our sure foundation, and perfect his good work in us! What a mercy is it to stand fast in the grace of the gospel! And what high ascriptions of eternal honour and glory are due to the mighty God, for all his greatness and his kindness to us!—Faithful ministers are to be recommended to the churches, and Christian salutations sent to them; all the members of which should express their cordial love, in the best manner, one towards another: And what better demonstration of the sincerity of it can there be, than heartily to wish and pray for peace, inclusive of every blessing, to all the chosen of God and members of Christ? May they for ever prosper! *Amen.*

A PRAC-

A PRACTICAL

EXPOSITION

OF THE

SECOND GENERAL EPISTLE

OF THE

APOSTLE PETER,

IN THE FORM OF A

PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND EPISTLE OF PETER.

THIS ſecond Epiſtle of the apoſtle *Peter* is moſt generally ſuppoſed to have been wrote in view of his near approaching death, about a year or two after the other, and three or four years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, to the ſame perſons, and with much the ſame deſign, for their further eſtabliſhment in faith and holineſs, and for their caution againſt apoſtacy, by means of the fiery trials that attended them, and were ſtill further coming upon them; and by means of corrupt libertine teachers, and profane ſcoffers at the promiſe of Chriſt's coming to judgment, as though, becauſe it was not already, it never would be brought to paſs. (See the preface to the firſt epiſtle.)

The divine authority of this ſecond epiſtle of *Peter* is well ſupported, and defended againſt the chief objection that ſome have made to it, on account of difference *in ſtyle*, by Dr. *Sherlock*, now biſhop of *London*, in his firſt *diſſertation*, annexed to his diſcourſes on *prophecy*.

The apoſtle, in connection with the inſcription and ſalutation, repreſents the comprehenſive bleſſings of the goſpel, together with the duties incumbent on thoſe that hope, or pretend to be partakers of them; and proves his teſtimony to Chriſt by divine revelation, *chap.* i. He then warns them of falſe teachers, that would ariſe among them in oppoſition to it, and deſcribes their abominable principles and practices, and the dreadful vengeance that ſhould be taken on them, while the righteous ſhould eſcape, *chap.* ii. and ſhews that, notwithſtanding all their perverſe cavils againſt the doctrine of Chriſt's coming to judgment, of which the conflagration at *Jeruſalem* would be a lively type and emblem, he certainly will come in due ſeaſon, when the preſent ſyſtem of this world ſhall be entirely diſſolved by

fire; and a new, refined, and glorious fabric shall be erected for the habitation of the saints: In prospect of all which, they ought to be holy in heart and life, and progressive in grace and in the knowledge of Christ; concluding with an ascription of glory to him, *chap.* iii.

CHAP. I.

The apostle salutes them who had obtained like precious faith, and reminds them of its attending blessings, 1,—4. *Exhorts them to add the exercise of various other graces to their faith, and encourages them thereto by the happy issues of their so doing,* 5,—11. *Assures them of his concern to be as assistant, as possible, to them therein, before his approaching decease,* 12,—15. *And confirms the truth of the gospel relating to Christ's appearing to judgment, as it may be gathered from an immediate testimony which came from heaven in his own and others hearing, and more directly proved by the inspired writings of the prophets,* 16,—21.

TEXT.

SIMON Peter, a servant and an apostle of Jesus Christ, to them that have obtained like precious faith with us, through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ:

PARAPHRASE.

I Who was named *Simon* at my circumcision, and surnamed *Peter* by our blessed Lord, upon my conversion, and confession of faith in him, (*John* i. 42, and *Matth.* xvi. 18.) who called me to be his ministring servant, and honoured me with the apostleship; even I, in his name and by his authority, now send this second epistle to those *Jews* of the dispersion, (see the note on 1 *Epist.* i. 1.) who by the sovereign disposals of divine grace, as it were by lot, (λαχοῦσι) are made partakers of the faith of God's elect, (1 *Epist.* i. 2. compared with *Tit.* i. 1.) which, though various in degrees, is of the same excellent nature and kind, as to its causes, acts and objects, fruits and benefits, and is of like great price in the sight of God, with that true and unfeigned faith, which we the apostles, who *have made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jesus Christ,* (ver. 16.) and which all of us, who believe to the saving of our souls, have obtained, not through any worthiness or ability of our own, but through the merit of that everlasting righteousness, which was wrought out, and brought in, by the obedience and sufferings of Jesus Christ *, who

NOTE.

* *Through the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ* (ἐν δικαιοσύνῃ τοῦ Θεοῦ ἡμῶν καὶ σωτῆρος Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ) may be literally rendered *in the righteousness of our God and Saviour Jesus Christ;* and so is to be understood as descriptive of one and the same person, the article in the *Greek* being prefixed only to the first of these titles; (see the note on *Eph.* i. 1.) but in the next verse no article is prefixed to either of them. Accordingly *the righteousness* here intended is *the mediatorial* righteousness of Christ, which is often styled *the righteousness*

who is a divine person and the only mediator, as being both our God and Saviour, who purchased all blessings for us, and on whose *behalf it is given unto us to believe on him.* (Phil. i. 29.)

2 Grace and peace be multiplied unto you, through the knowledge of God, and of Jesus our Lord,

2 May all the blessings of grace and peace, of free favour and clear discoveries of it, as the fountain, and prosperity of every kind, as its effect, abound with the richest variety and fulness to all and every one of you, through a believing, experimental, and increasing acquaintance with God, as your reconciled and covenant-God, and Father in Christ; as also with Jesus himself, and with what he has done, is doing, and will do, as the common Lord and Saviour of every one of us, who believe in him.

3 According as his divine power hath given unto us all things that *pertain* unto life and godliness, through the knowledge of him that hath called us to glory and virtue:

3 I heartily desire that ye may, and trust that ye shall, be thus abundantly blessed; since Jesus Christ our Lord, (*ver.* 2.) in the greatness of his power, which is truly divine, has already, * in his free favour, bestowed on us all the blessings that he sees best for us, relating to the present life, and especially all that are requisite, for maintaining and improving our spiritual life, till it be perfected in life eternal, and for every exercise of grace in all acts of piety toward God, till it be completed in glory, through the efficacious knowledge and faithful acknowledgment (δια της επιγνωσεως) of him, and of the Father through him, who has called us by the gospel to an inheritance of eternal glory, and to a courageous profession of our faith in hope of that inheritance †; and has effectually called us to this by a glorious operation of his mighty power in us.

4 Whereby are given

4 By which divine persons ‡ (*ver.* 2.) and the glorious

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ousness of God. (See the note on *Rom.* i. 17.) But if any would understand the word *God* to be in this place meant of *God the Father*, in *distinction* from our Saviour Jesus Christ, it is nevertheless to be taken for the *righteousness of Christ*; because, according to our translation, it is *the righteousness of God, and our Saviour Jesus Christ.* And what can this be, through which precious faith is obtained, but that righteousness of Christ which God has accepted, by which his justice is satisfied, and for the sake of which, he gives faith in it unto justification of life? And were we to render the words (εν δικαιοσυνη) *in the righteousness* of God and our Saviour, they point us to the righteousness of Christ, as the *object* of faith, or *that*, in which we believe unto righteousness, *Rom.* x 10 But as believing *in the object* of faith is ordinarily expressed by another preposition (εις) and never, as far as I find, by *this.* (εν) I rather chuse to consider this as signifying *by* or *through*, (εν pro δια) as it frequently doth in other places.

* The participle, (δεδωρημενης) here rendered *given*, may be considered as of the *middle voice*, which admits of a construction in the *active*, as well as *passive mood*, and takes off the *grammatical* difficulty of this sentence.

† *To glory and virtue*, (δια δοξης και αρετης) is most strictly speaking, as the margin has it, *by glory and virtue*; and may signify the *glorious power* by which we are called to eternal glory, as *the end*, and to Christian fortitude as *the means* of attaining it.

‡ *Whereby* (δι' ων) is *plural* and refers either to *glory and virtue*, mentioned at the close of the preceding verse,

given unto us exceeding great and precious promiſes; that by theſe you might be partakers of the divine nature, having eſcaped the corruption that is in the world through luſt.

rious operations of their power, by means of the goſpel, are given to us the beſt of promiſes, which are eminently *great*, far beyond our utmoſt conceptions, and much more beyond all our deſerts; and they are exceedingly prized by true believers, and every way excellent and valuable, grand and noble (τιμια) in themſelves, as they are entirely free and everlaſting promiſes, ordered in all things and ſure; and as they contain the ineſtimable bleſſings of life and godlineſs, pardon and peace, grace and glory, and are admirably ſuited to every exigence; (ινα) to the end that by an application and fulfilment of theſe promiſes, in all their variety, riches, and extent, ye might have ſuch communion with God (γενησθε κοινωνοι) in his holineſs, which on account of its reſemblance of him, derivation from him, tendency toward him, and complacency in him, may be called a divine nature; * ye having, as an introduction to it, and as a part and evidence of it, renounced and fled away, with vigour and abhorrence, (αποφυγοντες) from all the corrupt principles and practices, that ſpread and prevail among the men of this world, through the power of their depraved inclinations, and inordinate affections to carnal things.

5 And beſides this, giving all diligence, add to your faith, virtue; and to virtue, knowledge;

5 And for this reaſon, (αυτο τουτο) or in conſideration of what ye are already partakers of, ye ought to uſe the utmoſt care and diligence for a progreſſion in every grace and duty; as for inſtance, in humble dependence on divine power and promiſed aſſiſtances, (*ver.* 3, 4.) add to your precious faith a noble Chriſtian-courage, in its profeſſion and defence; and to your

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verſe, or to *God, and Jeſus our Lord*, at the cloſe of *ver.* 2.; and ſo may be rendered either *by which*, or *by whom*. If we refer it to *glory and virtue*, the meaning may be, that theſe promiſes are given to believers by that glorious energy or excellent glory, and efficacious power that attend the goſpel: Or if we render it, *by whom*, and refer it to *God and Jeſus our Lord*, it may intimate that theſe promiſes are given to us, both by God the Father and his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as the promiſe of the Spirit was, *John* xiv. 16, 26. and xvi. 7. and *Acts* i. 4. But were we to follow the reading of *Stephanus*, and one or two others of leſs note, which puts it in the *ſingular number* (δι' ου) it may refer either to *God*, or to *Jeſus our Lord*, as the antecedent mentioned *ver.* 2. the neareſt of which is *Jeſus our Lord*, whom, for that reaſon, I take to be intended in *ver.* 3. according to the paraphraſe upon it.

* *The divine nature* (θειας φυσεως) might have been much better rendered *a divine nature*, the expreſſion in the *Greek*, being without the article, moſt naturally carries this ſenſe; and that divine nature, which we are ſaid to be partakers of, is not by a participation of *the divine eſſence*, which is incommunicable to any creature; nor is it by a *perſonal union* with the *divine nature*, as the human nature of Chriſt is; but it is by a *divine impreſſion* of God's own *holy image* upon us, or by a *holy principle* infuſed into us, which introduces a contrary form to that which we had before by the *corruption that is in the world through luſt*.

your Christian courage, add still further advances in spiritual understanding, wisdom, and prudence.

6 And to knowledge, temperance; and to temperance, patience; and to patience, godliness;

6 And to this sort of excellent knowledge, add a due regulation and government of your passions and appetites, with a weanedness of heart from the alluring objects of flesh and sense; and to the moderation of your affections to earthly things, add patience under all tribulations, with a meek and quiet spirit, and an entire resignation to the will of your heavenly Father; and to your Christian patience, add all exercises of piety and devotion, in a holy reverence of God, and conscientious attention to every ordinance of divine worship, and all religious duties, according to his word, from a principle of love to him, in obedience to his command, and for his glory.

7 And to godliness, brotherly kindness; and to brotherly kindness, charity.

7 And to your religion toward God, add an affectionate love, tenderness, sympathy, and compassion, with every suitable fruit and expression of them, toward your fellow-Christians, as brethren in the Lord; and to this brotherly kindness, add an universal benevolence to all mankind, as partakers of the same human nature with yourselves, endeavouring to promote their temporal and spiritual welfare, whether they be friends or enemies: (see *Gal.* vi. 10.) These are things of great importance, and will turn to the best account.

8 For if these things be in you, and abound, they make *you that ye shall* neither *be* barren, nor unfruitful in the knowledge of our Lord Jesus Christ.

8 For if these excellent graces be found in you, and be lively and enlarged in their exercise, they will make you thriving Christians; so that ye will neither be slothful nor inactive (ἀργοι) in the concerns of your souls, and in the duties of your Christian profession; nor useless and unprofitable, and, like barren trees, destitute of holy fruits, suitable to the nature of your fiducial knowledge and acknowledgment of Christ, as our only Lord and Saviour; which will make you vigorous, diligent, and abounding in every good word and work, relating to God, yourselves, and others.

9 But he that lacketh these things, is blind, and cannot see far off, and hath forgotten that he was purged from his old sins.

9 But whatever professor of Christianity he be, that is destitute of the forementioned graces, or so remarkably deficient in them, as to have no experience of their exercise, like what is sensibly present to him, (ω μη παρεστι) let his pretences to light and knowledge be ever so great, he is still in spiritual darkness, like a blind man, or like one who winks hard, and shuts his eyes against the light; or at most (μυωπαζων) he has only a glimmering, confused, and short sight, which cannot discover distant objects, nor penetrate into the beauty and glory of gospel-truths, or of Christ and holiness; nor plainly discern the reality and importance of future things, which are as far out of his view, as if he were purblind, though they are made manifest in the word of God, and in the light of

of faith; and will ſoon be preſent in all the miſery, or happineſs of the eternal world: And he has thrown off a ſenſe of the obligations, end, and deſign of his ſolemn profeſſion, as ſignified by his baptiſm, of being purified from the ſins he formerly indulged; and is careleſs and unconcerned about being cleanſed by the blood and Spirit of Chriſt from the iniquities, which for a great while, even from his birth, had reigned over him. (*If.* xlviii. 8.)

10 Wherefore the rather, brethren, give diligence to make your calling and election ſure: for, if ye do theſe things, ye ſhall never fall:

10 Conſidering therefore the wide difference there is between real and nominal Chriſtians, and how many take up with the name, without the thing, let it excite you, my dear brethren, to be the more earneſtly careful, in the uſe of all means of grace, to obtain a full aſſurance, in the light of the Spirit, of your effectual calling, and thereby of your having been eternally choſen of God to ſalvation; ſince your election cannot be known but by its fruits in your calling, which are the firſt evidence of it, * and from which it may certainly be concluded. See to it then, that this be a firm and ſettled point with you, by its being manifeſted in ſuch holy effects, as will be a genuine and undoubted proof of it: For if ye live in the exerciſe of the graces but now ſpecified, (*ver.* 5,—7.) whatever trials, ſlips, and infirmities may attend you, ye ſhall never ſtumble ſo as to fall off from Chriſt, or apoſtatize from your faith in him and holy profeſſion of his name; nor ever fall into error or ſin to your perdition, or fall ſhort of eternal life.

11 For ſo an entrance ſhall be miniſtered unto you abundantly, into the everlaſting kingdom of our Lord

11 For while in this way and manner of making out your election by your effectual calling, ye add (ἐπιχορηγήσατε) *to your faith virtue*, &c. (ver. 5.) ye ſhall not only get ſafe to heaven, but ſhall have an abundant encreaſe of hope and joy in your way to it; and

NOTE.

* The ſcripture uſually ſpeaks of *election* and *calling* in their proper order, as the firſt was from eternity, and the other is in time; one the cauſe, and the other the fruit or effect, according to the account given of them in *Rom.* viii. 29, 30. *Eph.* i. 3,—7. and 2 *Theſ.* ii. 13, 14. But *here* the apoſtle inverts the order, and puts our calling *firſt*, becauſe his immediate deſign in this paſſage was not ſo much to diſcourſe of the things themſelves, as *of our knowledge in them*, and aſſurance concerning our *own intereſt* in them; and this knowledge can be obtained only in this order, by aſcending from the effect to the cauſe, from our calling to our election; and proving *this* by *that:* For the election of one or another particular perſon is an entire ſecret in the heart of God, till it breaks forth, and is made known by its effects. And therefore it is a vain, fruitleſs, unwarrantable, and preposterous attempt, for any perſons to puzzle themſelves about *their own* election, before they are *effectually called*, or have evidence in themſelves that they are ſo. But if their *effectual calling* be clearly made out, they may certainly conclude from thence that they were *elected;* ſince all, and none but the elect are ſo called: For otherwiſe their being called could not be a ſure proof, that they were elected, which is the very point in the apoſtle's view.

Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ.

and when ye come to die, a triumphant entrance shall be richly supplied and added to you (πλουσίως ἐπιχορηγηθήσεται) into all the sublime dignity, affluence, and delights of the eternal kingdom of our great Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, which he has purchased and taken possession of for us, who are interested in him, and whom he *will receive to himself, that where he is, there we may be also.* (John xiv. 3.)

12 Wherefore I will not be negligent to put you always in remembrance of these things, though ye know them, and be established in the present truth.

12 As these are things of the greatest consequence, I therefore cannot be unconcerned about reminding you of them, and pressing them upon you, once and again, in order to your being suitably affected with them, and putting them into practice; though I am well satisfied that ye are already acquainted with them, and confirmed in a belief of the truth of the gospel, according to the present dispensation of it; and particularly of the truth, which I am now recommending to you about the necessity of universal holiness, in order to your joyful *entrance into the everlasting kingdom of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ*, and which, in this day of trial and affliction, eminently calls for a present attention to it.

13 Yea, I think it meet, as long as I am in this tabernacle, to stir you up, by putting *you* in remembrance;

13 Yea, so great is its importance, and so nearly are ye concerned in it, that I count it fit and proper, and (δικαιον) a piece of justice to truth and you, as long as I continue in the body, (which is like a moveable tent, set up for a little time, and soon to be taken down again) not barely to inform you of these things, which ye may have little or no need of; but earnestly to excite you to consider and practise them, by repeatedly reminding you of them, lest at any time, through the treachery of your memories, and the heedlessness of your spirits, ye let them slip and make no proper use of them.

14 Knowing that shortly I must put off *this* my tabernacle, even as our Lord Jesus Christ hath shewed me.

14 This I am the more desirous to do while opportunity lasts, as being well assured, that the earthly house of this tabernacle will quickly be dissolved, when I must quit my abode in it; even as our dear Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ has manifested to me, that the time is now at hand, when I must seal my testimony to him, according to his former intimation about the manner of death, by which in old age I should glorify God. (*John* xxi. 18, 19.)

15 Moreover, I will endeavour, that you may be able after my decease, to have these things always in remembrance.

15 And as I am very solicitous for your being established in, and deeply possessed of, these interesting truths, not merely during my continuance in the body; so I shall make it my study and labour, for the little time I have to live, to inculcate them upon you, as I have done by committing them to writing in my former epistle, and now do in this, that ye may ever

retain a remembrance and lively ſenſe of them, after I am dead and gone to a better world, by a departure (ἔξοδον) of my ſoul from the body, and from all the ſins and ſorrows of time, to a perfectly holy and bleſſed eternity.

16 For we have not followed cunningly deviſed fables, when we made known unto you the power and coming of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, but were eye witneſſes of his majeſty.

16 For we, the apoſtles of Chriſt, who publiſh the goſpel of the grace of God, have not therein deviſed ſophiſtical and idle tales of our own heads, like the traditional fabulous ſtories that abound among *Jews* and *Gentiles*; nor have we, like them, propagated vain conceits, by artful and cunning methods of deceiving, when we declared unto you in preaching, as I alſo have done in writing, (1 *Epiſt.* i. 13. and iv. 5.) the things that relate to the divine authority, power, and glory, with which our Lord Jeſus Chriſt will come to judge the world at the laſt day; but ſeveral of us, *James* and *John* together with myſelf, were preſent at his tranſfiguration on the mount, which was a lively emblem and prefiguration of his final glorious appearing; and were eye-witneſſes of the illuſtrious majeſty and grandeur, in which he then ſhone, like himſelf, as with the meridian brightneſs of the ſun; and was eminently owned of his heavenly Father. (See the note on *Matth.* xvii. 2.)

17 For he received from God the Father, honour and glory, when there came ſuch a voice to him from the excellent glory. This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed.

17 For, at that very time, he received an honourable and glorious teſtimony from God the Father himſelf, which put the higheſt dignity upon his character, as his proper Son and the true Meſſiah, when an audible articulate voice was directed immediately to him from the *Shechinah*, which then appeared as a magnificent ſymbol of the divine preſence, (ſee the notes on *Matth.* xvii. 5. and *Luke* ix. 26.) and from which God the Father, who is infinitely glorious in himſelf, and dwells in the inacceſſible light and glory of the upper world, diſtinctly pronounced theſe words, *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed*, that is, This Jeſus is by way of eminence my moſt dearly beloved eternal Son, in whoſe perſon and office, undertakings, and performances, I am exceedingly delighted, as I alſo am with all thoſe that are found in him by vital union with him; and ſo cloathed with his righteouſneſs, and waſhed from their ſins in his blood.

18 And this voice which came from heaven, we heard, when we were with him in the holy mount.

18 And this voice, in which theſe remarkable words were uttered immediately by the God of heaven, from the cloud of glory in the region of the air, all of us then preſent diſtinctly heard with a clear underſtanding of its import, when we attended our glorious Lord at the very time of his transfiguration on mount *Tabor*, which was ſanctified or made relatively holy, for the time being, by the divine preſence;

fence; as mount *Horeb* was when the Lord appeared to *Moses* in the bush that burned, and was not consumed. (*Exod.* iii. 4, 5.)

19 We have also a more sure word of prophecy; whereunto ye do well that ye take heed, as unto a light that shineth in a dark place, until the day dawn, and the day-star arise in your hearts:

19 And beside this illustrious attestation to our blessed Lord, which may well be considered as an *emblematical* and *presumptive* notification of his future appearing with divine power and majesty, (*ver.* 16.) * We have a still more *direct* proof of it, as it may be more assuredly gathered from the express declarations even of the Old Testament, (*ver.* 20, 21.) which are confirmed in the New, (see *Psal.* xcvi. 13. *Dan.* vii. 13. 14. *Matth.* xiii. 40.—43. and xvi. 27. and xxv. 31,—46. and xxvi. 64. *John* v. 28, 29. *Acts* i. 11. and xvii. 31. 2 *Cor.* v. 10. 1 *Thess.* i. 10. 2 *Thess.* i. 7,—10. 2 *Tim.* iv. 1. and 1 *Pet.* i. 9.—13.) unto which testimony of inspired prophecy, relating to this very point, ye ought carefully to attend, so as to be guided and determined by it, as a light that, like a lamp in a dark place, shines amidst the darkness of Judaism and Heathenism, and of all carnal hearts; and *the darkness comprehends it not:* (John i. 5.) It is your duty and interest to study and build your faith upon this, till the day of Christ's glorious appearing shall begin to break; and till he, as *the Sun of righteousness, the day-star from on high*, and *the bright and morning star*, (Malach. iv. 2. Luke i. 78. and Rev. xxii. 16.) shall arise in full lustre, and shed such a transcendent light in your souls, as shall

NOTE.

* *We have a more sure word of prophecy* is not to be understood, as though the word of prophecy were in itself more certain than the glorious attestation which was given to Christ from heaven, in the sight and hearing of the apostles; or as though *this*, as far as it went and was reported by the apostles, were not to be as fully credited as *that*. But it was a more certain and indisputable proof of Christ's *second appearing with power and great glory*, than could be gathered from what passed in the mount, according to the ingenious and judicious sense, in which Dr. *Sherlock*, now bishop of *London*, has taken it, in his *Discourse on Prophecy*, page 20,—22. where he observes, "that *the power* and *coming* of our Lord *Jesus Christ* is the only point here in question;" and so it is, as though the apostle should say, It is a great presumption that Christ shall come in *glory*, that we have already seen him *glorified;* and it is a further evidence of his *power* to deliver his servants, since God has openly declared him to be his *well beloved Son.* But to assure us that he will indeed *so come*, and *so use* his power, *we have a more sure word of prophecy;* i. e we have the very word of God, (speaking by his prophets) to whom all *futurity is known*, to assure us of the certainty of this *future* event. —But *Gherard* supposes that the *comparative, surer*, may be here used for the *positive* degree. *sure*, as in the *Greek* of *Acts* xvii 21. Or rather he, *Beza*, and *Pijcator* take the *comparative* to be put for the *superlative* degree, as in the *Greek* of *Acts* xxv. 10 1 *Cor.* xiii. 13. and xv 19; and to no comparison may be here designed, but only a strong assertion of the certainty or firmness of the prophetic testimony. See also *Glassius*'s Philologia Sacra, page 428. where he gives several other instances of the *comparative* being put for the *superlative* degree, as particularly in *Matth* xi. 11. xviii. 1 and xiii. 32.; and tells us that some refer, 2 *Pet.* i 19 to this change of the degrees of comparison.

entirely dissipate all obscurity, or doubt, about what was intimated by the vision on the mount, and is further confirmed by the sure word of prophecy.

20 Knowing this first, that no prophecy of the scripture is of any private interpretation.

20 In the mean while, ye may confidently depend upon the prophetic testimony to Christ's future glorious appearing, as being, first of all, well satisfied, that no prophecy contained in the sacred writings of the Old Testament, and confirmed by the New, is the product of any man's own invention, according to his private fancy, opinion, or judgment about it, the meaning of which the ancient prophets themselves often did not thoroughly understand. (1 *Pet.* i. 10, 11.)

21 For the prophecy came not in old time by the will of man: but holy men of God spake *as they were* moved by the holy Ghost.

21 For none of those prophecies were delivered, and committed to writing, in former times, by the contrivance, will, and pleasure of the prophets, according to what they, as men, thought might be for the best: But those sacred penmen, whom God sanctified for himself, and for his use and service, spake and wrote only such things therein, as were suggested to them by the Holy Spirit, whose immediate dictate excited them to utter the ideas which he raised in their minds, and to express them in words that should convey the true sense of them, according to the further explication, which he has now given of them in New Testament light.

RECOLLECTIONS.

It is honour enough for any gospel-minister to be, what the apostles counted themselves, the servants of Jesus Christ; and they, who are truly such, cannot but heartily wish, that grace and peace, inclusive of every blessing, may be multiplied to all that have obtained like precious faith with themselves, through the infinite merit of the righteousness of God their Saviour, and through the knowledge of him, who has effectually called them by the gospel to a glorious inheritance, and to a free and holy profession of their faith and hope, till they enter with triumph into his everlasting kingdom. How precious are the promises, by which believers are made partakers of a divine nature, in a holy conformity to God, and departure from all the wickedness of this world, that proceeds from the corruption of men's own hearts! But O, of how great concern is it, to give all diligence, by divine assistance, to add to our faith every Christian grace and lively exercise of it! This will make and prove us to be active believers, whose knowledge of our Lord and Saviour is not a lifeless notion, but will produce substantial and assuring evidences of our effectual calling, and consequently of our election, from whence it flows; and will be the means of preserving us from utter apostacy and falling short of heaven. But he, who is destitute of all this, is still wandering in the dark, and has forgot his profession of being purified from his former sins. What need therefore have gospel-professors of being often put in mind of these important things, though they already know them! And what care should Christ's ministring servants take to repeat them on all occasions, that they may be remembred and practised when they are dead, and gone to heaven; especially considering, that their souls must soon depart from their bodies, which are the frail tabernacles of their present abode! And with what confidence may they recommend and inculcate such things as are founded on the testimony of God himself by his apostles and holy prophets, relating to Christ, whom he declared, with an audible voice from the excellent glory on the mount, to be his beloved Son, in whom he is well pleased; and relating to the divine majesty and power with which he will gloriously appear at his coming to judge the world! These are not cunningly devised fables, but unquestionable

queſtionable truths, as contained in the infallible word of God, which was wrote not according to the private will and fancy of men, but by the inſpiration of his Spirit; and ought to be attended to as a light, which he has given to guide us through all our darkneſs in this world, till, by the riſing of the Sun of Righteouſneſs upon our ſouls, we arrive at the unclouded light and glory of the world to come. O may the bleſſed author of the holy ſcriptures lead us into the knowledge of his mind and will in them, and make us wiſe to our own ſalvation!

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle cautions believers againſt falſe teachers, whom he deſcribes by their pernicious principle and influence, 1,—3. *Shews the certainty of their puniſhment, from the examples of the fallen angels, of the old world, and of* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, *which the godly ſhall eſcape, as* Lot *did out of* Sodom, 4,—9. *And gives a black account at large of theſe ſeducers, as they were aggravatedly wicked under high pretences to liberty and purity,* 10,—22.

TEXT.

BUT there were falſe prophets alſo among the people, even as there ſhall be falſe teachers among you, who privily ſhall bring in damnable hereſies, even denying the Lord that bought them, and bring upon themſelves ſwift deſtruction.

PARAPHRASE.

BUT as there were true and holy prophets of the Lord, who (as has been obſerved, *chap.* i. 21.) wrote under the inſpiration of his Spirit, and are to be attended to; ſo there were likewiſe falſe pretenders to this character, who roſe up in former times among the people of *Iſrael* to ſeduce them, and were to be guarded againſt; and this is the caſe under the goſpel-ſtate, according to the predictions of our Lord and his inſpired apoſtles. (*Matth.* xxiv. 11. *Acts* xx. 30. 1 *Cor.* xi. 19. and 1 *Tim.* iv. 1.) There are and will be falſe teachers riſing up among you of the *Jewiſh* nation, who, under various pretences, will covertly and craftily introduce the moſt pernicious heretical tenets, which tend to the eternal deſtruction of thoſe that broach, and thoſe that receive them, as they, both doctrinally and practically, renounce the wiſdom, authority, grace, and holineſs of their Lord and Maſter, as diſcovered in the goſpel-revelation of him, whom they boaſt of, as the God that redeemed or delivered them out of *Egypt* with a mighty hand *, and

NOTE.

* *The Lord that bought them* may, with the greateſt propriety, be here underſtood of God, as the providential governor and deliverer of *Iſrael:* For the word (δεσπότης) here rendered *the Lord*, is applied to God, when ſpoken of by way of diſtinction from our Lord Jeſus, in that parallel place, *Jude*, ver. 4. and is ſeveral times uſed in other parts of the New Teſtament with a reference to the *Father;* but, as far as I find, never to *the Son:* And his having *bought them*, *purchaſe* which Chriſt made of theſe perſons, ſeems to relate to the *temporal* deliverances he had wrought for *Iſrael*, as his profeſſing people, with a reference to *Deut.* xxxii 6. where, ſpeaking of them as his viſible church, it is ſaid, *Is not he thy Father that has bought thee?* And, in the paſſage before us, there is no intimation of *the death of Chriſt*, or of redemption *by his blood*, as there uſually is when redemption *by price* is intended. —Or if it be ſuppoſed to relate to the

and has, through a ſucceſſion of many ages, ſignally owned as his profeſſing people, and wrought many temporal ſalvations for; and ſo, by acting the moſt ungrateful, abominable, and ſelf-condemning part, they conſtructively deny him, and pull down ſpeedy and utter deſtruction upon their own guilty heads, which may overtake them before they are aware. (1 *Theſſ.* v. 3.)

2 And many ſhall follow their pernicious ways, by reaſon of whom the way of truth ſhall be evil ſpoken of.

2 And ſuch is the natural depravity of mankind, and the enmity of their carnal hearts againſt God and godlineſs, that many profeſſors of Chriſt's name, who have not the grace of God in truth, will be ſeduced into their deſtructions, (απωλειαις) and follow their deteſtable example in licentious principles and practices, on account of which the truth of the goſpel, and the way of holineſs and happineſs according to it, (βλασφημηθησεται) will be blaſphemouſly ſpoken of by its enemies.

3 And through covetouſneſs ſhall they with feigned words make merchandiſe of you: whoſe judgment now of a long time lingereth not, and their damnation ſlumbereth not.

3 And, from covetous reaches after worldly gain, theſe ſeducers will uſe abundance of deceitful flattering ſpeeches, which have no truth or ſincerity in them, and are only a cover of their baſe deſigns to make a prey of you, that they may get ſome ſecular advantage by you, as merchants do by their traffic: But theirs is a dreadful merchandiſe, whoſe righteous condemnation has been of old determined of God, (*Jude*, ver. 4. ſee the note there) to be executed for their flagrant iniquities, in due ſeaſon, without delay; and whoſe everlaſting deſtruction haſtens apace, and ſoon will certainly come upon them with a vengeance, (*Deut.* xxxii. 34, 35.) as may be concluded from the courſe of God's dealings with former tranſgreſſors.

4 For if God ſpared not the angels that ſinned, but caſt *them* down to hell, and delivered *them* into chains of darkneſs, to be reſerved unto judgment;

4 For if (as we well know) God in his awful juſtice did not ſhew any favour, or abate the puniſhment due to that higher rank of originally more excellent creatures, the angels themſelves, who, through pride and envy, tranſgreſſed the law which God had given them for the trial of their obedience, by ſwerving from its precepts; but for their firſt ſin hurled them all down with righteous indignation from their bliſsful, honourable, and holy habitation in heaven, (*Jude*, ver. 6.) into ſome unknown place of miſery, which is called the *deep* and *the bottomleſs pit*; (Luke viii. 31.

NOTE.

perſons, that they might be eternally ſaved, it muſt be underſtood only according to the judgment of charity, during their former credible profeſſion of his name: Or his having *bought them* may only ſignify his having *purchaſed a dominion over them* in ſuch a manner as may beſt anſwer the ends of his kingdom, which rules over all; he being the Lord of the quick and the dead, good and bad, and his univerſal Lordſhip being founded on redemption by his blood.

31. and Rev. ix. 1, 2. and xi. 7.) and committed them, like condemned criminals, to safe custody, as though bound with the strongest chains in a dungeon of darkness, horror, and despair, to be secured for full torment against the general judgment of the great day.

5 And spared not the old world, but saved Noah the eighth *person*, a preacher of righteousness, bringing in the flood upon the world of the ungodly;

5 And if the holy God had no pity on the wicked generation of men of the same common nature with ourselves in the antediluvian age of the world, that despised and disregarded all his solemn and gracious warnings with great long suffering and patience; but if, while he saved *Noah* *, who was the eighth at the head of them that were preserved in the ark, (1 *Pet.* iii. 20.) and was by divine commission a faithful preacher of moral righteousness repentance, and reformation, and of the righteousness which is by faith, of which he himself was an heir, (*Heb.* xi. 7.) and a preacher of the righteous judgments of God, which would destroy that impenitent, unbelieving, and disobedient world; If God, I say, at the appointed season, swallowed up the whole of that perverse set of people in the universal deluge of water which drowned them, one and all, how great soever their numbers were:

6 And turning the cities of Sodom and Gomorrha into ashes, condemned *them* with an overthrow, making *them* an ensample unto those that after should live ungodly;

6 And if in like terrible righteousness, and executed by a contrary element, he rained fire and brimstone from heaven upon *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, together with *Admah* and *Zeboim*, (Gen. xix. 24, 25. and Deut. xxix. 23.) to the utter subversion of those cities, reducing them, with all their profligate inhabitants, to ashes in the most dreadful catastrophe, (καταστροφη) to which he justly condemned them for their abominable wickedness; and so set them forth as an example of his indignation and wrath, as a type or pattern (υποδειγμα) of the final conflagration and eternal fire, which shall consume all the wicked of the earth, (*Jude*, ver. 7.) that it might be a warning to all resolute sinners of succeeding ages, who persist in their iniquities, and cast off his fear; and might shew them what they must expect at his hand:

7 And delivered just Lot, vexed with the filthy conversation of the wicked:

7 And if, in the midst of all the flaming desolation of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, the gracious God put a special mark of kind distinction upon his righteous servant *Lot*, whom he plucked as a brand out of the fire;

NOTE.

* *Noah* was the *tenth* from *Adam*, as appears by the genealogy in *Luke* iii. 36, —38. and therefore the *eighth* person cannot mean the eighth from him, but the eighth of them, or the head of the eight, that were saved in the ark, which were his wife, and his three sons and their wives, together with himself, for whose sake they were preserved, *Gen* vi. 8. 10. compared with *chap* vii 7 And therefore the apostle might particularly mention him as the eighth. (See also the note on 1 *Pet.* iii. 20.)

fire; and so (ἐῤῥύσατο) with a sort of merciful violence rescued him from it, (*Gen.* xix. 16.) who had been sorely grieved, fatigued, and oppressed in his own pious soul at the vile, dissolute, lascivious, obscene and unnatural behaviour of that perverse and wicked people.

8 (For that righteous man dwelling among them, in seeing and hearing, vexed his righteous soul from day to day, with *their* unlawful deeds)

8 (For this holy, just, and good man, who dwelt among them, and daily saw and heard what shocking crimes were openly committed in the course of their flagitious lives, exceedingly laid them to heart, and with the bitterest anguish (ἐβασανίζεν) even tormented his holy soul in mournful reflections on their abominably filthy and unjust actions, which were contrary to all the laws of God and nature.)

9 The Lord knoweth how to deliver the godly out of temptations, and to reserve the unjust unto the day of judgment to be punished:

9 As certainly as these are all undoubted facts, we may from thence with equal certainty conclude, to the joy of the saints, and the terror of the wicked, that, be the corruptions of the age ever so great, and the snares, troubles, and dangers of his people ever so many, the great Lord of heaven and earth, whose understanding is infinite, and power uncontroulable, and whose kingdom rules over all, perfectly knows at what time, in what manner, and by what means, to extricate those out of all their trials and afflictions, who like *Noah* and *Lot* are religious worshippers of him; and he will assuredly do it in his love and faithfulness to them: And he equally knows how to hold the wicked and ungodly in safe custody, like the fallen angels, (*ver.* 4.) under his supreme dominion, till he shall bring them forth, as condemned criminals, in the day of the final judgment, to be punished according to the iniquity of their hearts and lives.

10 But chiefly them that walk after the flesh in the lust of uncleanness, and despise government: presumptuous *are they*, self-willed; they are not afraid to speak evil of dignities:

10 But especially he knows how to reserve, and will severely deal with those impious seducers, (*ver.* 1.) who, answerable to their corrupt principles, live according to the carnal dictates and desires of their sensual minds, indulging themselves, and going on without restraint, in a gratification of their impure and lascivious inclinations, and sodomitical practices; (*Jude*, ver. 7, 8.) and who insolently pour contempt upon all regular government and authority over them, that would put a check upon their vices: They are a daring, refractory, disobedient, and headstrong sort of people, ever seeking to please themselves, and have no law to govern them but their own will; nor do they scruple or fear to speak reproachfully, not only of the apostles and ministers of Christ *, but of civil

NOTE.

* *Despising government, and speaking evil of dignities*, some think refers to

civil magistrates that are advanced to high dignity, and worthy of honour, as they are set over them, and are the ordinance of God to regulate and controul their exorbitant passions, appetites, and manners.

11 Whereas angels, which are greater in power and might, bring not railing accusation against them before the Lord.

11 They herein act a very contrary part to the holy angels that *excel in strength, and do the commandments of God, hearkening to the voice of his word,* (Psal. ciii. 20.) and are superior in dignity and might to these vain boasters, or to any earthly potentates; and yet they, considering civil magistrates as the ordinance of God for good, (see the notes on *Rom.* xiii. 1,—4.) have such a reverence of him, and are so generous and benevolent to them, as not to revile their persons and government, or bring a slanderous censure upon them (βλασφημον κρισιν) in the presence of God: Nay, even *Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil* himself, used no opprobrious bitter language against him. (*Jude*, ver. 9.)

12 But these, as natural brute beasts, made to be taken and destroyed, speak evil of the things that they understand not, and shall utterly perish in their own corruption;

12 But these presumptuous despisers of government, (*ver.* 10.) instead of imitating the good angels in the decorum of their conduct, are irrational, furious, and brutish, in following their own sensual inclinations, like beasts of prey that are void of understanding, and naturally inclined to rapine and destruction, and are made to be taken and destroyed by men, for whose use they were originally created: These act at such a monstrous rate, as to reproach and rail against persons and things, both of a civil and religious nature, whose use and excellence they neither know, nor approve of; and they shall be utterly destroyed for, and by means of, the indulged corruptions of their own minds and manners.

13 And shall receive the reward of unrighteousness, *as* they that count it pleasure to riot in the day-time: spots

13 And they shall reap the bitter fruit and wages which are justly due to all their complicated wickedness, as those that glory and take delight in voluptuous and vicious courses, which they impudently pursue in open day-light, instead of being ashamed of

NOTE.

to the vile notions that the *Nicolaitans* and the *Gnostics* after them, vented about angelical powers, and that the apostle, in the next verse, refers to the *good angels not bringing a railing accusation* against the apostate spirits, which I have there glanced at, by pointing to what the apostle *Jude* says *ver.* 9. about the *archangel's not bringing a railing accusation against the devil;* though that seems to be an additional thought, and not the same with our apostle's; and it appears most natural to me to understand him in this verse, as describing persons, whoever they were, that despised *civil government*, and spoke evil of *earthly dignities;* in opposition to which, he, in the next verse, alledges the contrary conduct of the good angels that *bring no railing accusation against them.* with whom he may possibly include ecclesiastical rulers. (See the note on *Jude*, ver. 8.)

ſpots *they are* and blemiſhes, ſporting themſelves with their own deceivings, while they feaſt with you;

of them as *works of darkneſs*, which people, that have the leaſt grain of modeſty left, dare venture to practiſe only in the night: (1 *Theſſ.* v. 7.) They are a reproach and ſcandal to the Chriſtian name, gratifying their luxurious inclinations with their own deceived and deceiving devices, whereby they cunningly inſinuate themſelves into your favourable opinion of them, and pleaſe themſelves with their having cheated and impoſed upon you, while, under pretences of love and friendſhip, they ſocially partake in ordinary or religious feaſts with you. (*Jude*, ver. 12. ſee the note there.)

14 Having eyes full of adultery, and that cannot ceaſe from ſin; beguiling unſtable ſouls: an heart they have exerciſed with covetous practices; curſed children:

14 Their eyes are continually and inſatiably employed in wanton adulterous glances, to diſcover their own lewd inclinations, and excite the like in others, and to find out proper objects for inflaming and gratifying the vileſt affections; and ſo propenſe are they to all iniquity, that they know not how to refrain from contriving to commit it, or endeavouring to draw others into it; and ſo, by their enticements in word and deed, they enſnare and catch poor unguarded ſouls, that are not eſtabliſhed in the truth and holineſs of the goſpel, nor fortified with grace againſt their guileful arts. Their hearts are entirely engaged in contrivances how to compaſs their covetous deſires after the riches, honours, and defiling pleaſures of this world. They are children of wrath, devoted to deſtruction under the curſe of God's righteous and holy law, whoſe vengeance is ready to be executed upon them.

15 Which have forſaken the right way, and are gone aſtray, following the way of Balaam *the ſon* of Boſor, who loved the wages of unrighteouſneſs;

15 And God may juſtly abandon and abhor them, and give them up to utter ruin, who have renounced the only true way of ſalvation by Jeſus Chriſt, and of walking before God in faith and holy obedience, according to his mind and will; and have wandered from the path of truth and duty into the ways of ſin and error, that lead to eternal miſery, as they tread in the very ſteps of that infamouſly wicked prophet, *Balaam* the ſon of *Beor*, (Numb. xxii. 5.) which in the *Babylonian* dialect is pronounced *Boſor;* and follow his deteſtable example, who, notwithſtanding all his fair pretences to the contrary, hankered after, and had a heart in love with the iniquitous rewards which *Balak* offered him, that he might unrighteouſly curſe God's *Iſrael.*

16 But was rebuked for his iniquity: the dumb aſs,

16 But he was ſeverely reproved for his ſin in going about to tranſgreſs the poſitive command of the Lord,* and *that* by a brute beaſt, the aſs he rode upon,

NOTE.

* Though *Balaam* had once and again ſaid, that *he could not go beyond the*

ass. speaking with man's voice, forbad the madness of the prophet.

upon, which, though naturally a dumb creature, was miraculously enabled to speak with an articulate voice like a man; which was a strong indication to the infatuated prophet, that he ought by no means to have persisted in his mad and foolish attempt, which could only turn to his own confusion. (*Numb.* xxii. 22,—32.)

17 These are wells without water, clouds that are carried with a tempest, to whom the mist of darkness is reserved for ever.

17 To give a little further account of the false teachers I am speaking of, they are deceitful, unstable, and utterly destitute of all that is good; their high pretences to knowledge and piety, are like wells that bid fair for the relief of a thirsty traveller; but, having no water in them, disappoint his hopes: And as clouds often look promising for rain to refresh the earth, but are soon dispersed by tempestuous winds, and produce noxious vapours instead of any good effects; so these deceivers pretend to make their proselytes wise to salvation, but are carried by the violence of their corruptions from one error and sin to another, with such a malignant influence, that neither they nor their followers ever come to the knowledge of the truth, and the practice of holiness; and the thickest cloud of horrible darkness, misery, and despair is kept in store, by the righteous judgment of God, for these vile miscreants to be their dreadful portion for ever.

18 For when they speak great swelling *words* of vanity, they allure through the lusts of the flesh, through much wantonness, those that were clean escaped from them who live in error:

18 For when they utter great and pompous words with an air of sanctity, and of making some wonderful discoveries, they are all a noise about nothing, empty sounds that vent the pride and vanity of their own hearts; and are thrown out as a bait to entice and catch unwary souls, by being accommodated to the sensual inclinations of depraved nature, and to the lascivious temper of those, that had indeed been brought off from the errors of judaism, or of heathenism, and in their outward behaviour, * for a while at least, had fled from the conversation and practices of such,

P 2

NOTES.

the word of the Lord, and was constrained to refuse *Balak*'s offer; yet it appears from the whole history of him in *Numbers*, (see *chaps.* xxii. xxiii.) that his covetous heart was so set upon the offered bribe, as to make him earnestly desirous, and exceeding restless in attempts, to get a dispensation of God's express command that he should not go with *Balak*'s messengers to curse *Israel*; and he certainly would have cursed them, had not God invincibly over-ruled his mind, and restrained him from it, contrary to his own inclination: And when he could not carry his point, he gave such wicked counsel, as was the means of drawing *Israel* into a provoking trespass against the Lord, which brought a dreadful plague upon them, as appears from *Numb.* xxxi. 16. and *Rev.* ii. 14.

* Some good copies instead of *clean* or *truly* (ὀντως) read *a little* or *a little while*; (ὀλιγον) others, *almost*; (ὀλιγως) and the *Ethiopic*, *a few*, (ὀλιγους) Vid. *Mill* in loc. But which ever *reading* we follow, it seems to relate only to *a change of notions*, and *an external reformation.* (See the note on *ver.* 20.)

such, as lead wicked lives according to their erroneous principles.

19 While they promise them liberty, they themselves are the servants of corruption: for of whom a man is overcome, of the same is he brought in bondage.

19 At the same time that they flatter their followers with promises of all the liberty they can wish for, to indulge their licentious pleasures, without fear or danger, they are themselves the worst of slaves to the corruptions of their own hearts, which will issue in their final destruction: For whatever a man is entirely overmatched and conquered by, as they are by their own lusts, he is brought into an absolute and slavish subjection to it, like a captive in war that is fallen into the hands of a victorious enemy; and all apostates will surely find that such a sort of pretended liberty is the vilest slavery.

20 For if after they have escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of the Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, they are again entangled therein, and overcome; the latter end is worse with them than the beginning.

20 For if after they have been so far externally reformed from the gross and scandalous practices of the men of this world which lies in wickedness, (1 *John* v. 19.) as to have fled from those defilements in life, though not in heart *, through the convictions and restraints that they were brought under by the notions they had received of Jesus Christ, as a Sovereign and a Saviour, to deliver them from sin and the wrath to come; if, after all this, they are again ensnared and involved in those iniquities, and, like persons thoroughly conquered and governed by them, yield themselves up as servants to obey them; their case is more aggravatedly guilty, dangerous, and hopeless, than it was before they knew any thing of Christ and the gospel; and especially than it was, when they first had some conceptions of them.

21 For it had been better for them not to have known the way of righteousness, than after they have known *it*, to turn from the holy commandment delivered unto them.

21 For their sin and punishment would really have been less, had they never heard, or received any notion of Christ and the way of holiness, and of righteousness, through him, to eternal life, than, after they have been acquainted with it, to revolt and apostatize from the pure and holy doctrine, which had been preached to them with divine authority to bind it upon their consciences. (See *Matth.* xi. 20,—24. and *John* ix. 41. and xv. 22.)

22 But

NOTE.

* *Escaped the pollutions of the world through the knowledge of Christ*, and *clean escaped from them who live in error*, (ver. 18. see the note there) are the strongest expressions of good that are used in the description of these apostates, and yet neither these, nor any other, import that they ever were really partakers of *special* saving grace: For persons (like the *stony* and *thorny* ground hearers, *Matth.* xiii. 20.—22. and like *Herod*, Mark vi. 20.) may be so impressed by mere notions of Christ and the gospel, as to be restrained from gross sins, and brought to a credible profession of obedience, for a while, to the divine commands, and not be thoroughly turned in heart to God, as it is apparent these apostates were not, by their being represented still the same in their natural disposition, as the dog is, that returns to his own vomit, and the sow to her wallowing in the mire, *ver.* 22. (See the paraphrase there.)

22 But it is happened unto them according to the true proverb, The dog *is* turned to his own vomit again; and, The sow that was washed, to her wallowing in the mire.

22 But it has fallen out with them according to two ancient proverbs, one of which is recorded in the divinely true word of God, (*Prov.* xxvi. 11.) and both are remarkably verified in these apostates; they, under the power of conviction by the light of the gospel, eased their burdened consciences by casting off some vicious practices which they had been addicted to; but their nature not being changed by renewing grace, and their inmost temper being still the same as ever, when their pangs were off, they betook themselves again to their former filthy courses with as much eagerness as before; and so they are like a dog that had cast up what was offensive to his stomach; but, continuing a dog still, and acting suitable to his own nature as such, he licks up his own vomit again; and, under all their external reformations, they are like a sow that was washed from the filth she had contracted by wallowing in mud and dirt; but, being a sow still, returns, according to her own swinish temper, to rolling herself about in the mire again.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How pernicious and detestable are heretical teachers, whose corrupt principles and practices are subversive of the gospel, even to constructively denying that God, who they own has wrought wonderful deliverances in his providence for them, as his professing people! They put on specious appearances of wisdom and piety to entice, ensnare, defile, and ruin unstable souls: But with all their high swelling words of vanity, they are void of all good, like wells and clouds without water; and walk after the flesh. They carry on the vilest designs of covetousness, pride, luxury, and all manner of uncleanness, and are a reproach to the Christian name, and all religious society. They presumptuously despise the best of things, which they know nothing of, but which stand in opposition to their carnal views; and under vain boasts and deceitful promises to others of a liberty, which is downright licentiousness, they are themselves the worst of slaves, under every tyrannizing lust, to their own perdition, and the perdition of those that apostatize from Christ and the gospel, through their influence. How shocking are these thoughts! But we need not be stumbled at them, since we are forewarned that such seducers would arise in the church, and draw away many into their mischievous errors and sins. But, ah, how dreadful is the condemnation of those who preach and propagate, and of those who are perverted by heresies that tend to, and will issue in eternal destruction! They have forsaken the only true way to eternal life; and the truth of the gospel is defamed by them, and by others on their account They are under the curse of God, and liable, without repentance, to severer rebukes than he gave to *Balaam* for his iniquity, by miraculously opening the mouth of the ass he rode upon. Judgment is already passed upon them in the purpose and word of God; and their damnation hastens apace, till it come with fury upon them, as it did upon the fallen angels, and the sinners of the old world in the days of *Noah*, that eminent preacher of righteousness, and upon the profligate cities of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*. They are held, as it were, in adamantine chains, to be punished at the great day. But the righteous, who are grieved at the transgressions of the wicked, shall be as effectually delivered, in God's way and time, from all evil, as *Noah* was from the deluge, and *Lot* from the conflagration of those infamous cities. Alas! How heavy will the destruction of the deceivers and deceived be! They shall utterly perish for, and in their own corruption, and receive the dismal reward of all their unrighteousness, in which they rioted and delighted, with open impudence; and the most hideous darkness of horror and despair is laid up in store for their endless misery. Ah! How aggravated is their guilt; and how proportionable

able muſt be their puniſhment, who have been externally reformed through convictions by goſpel-light; but, taking up ſhort of a work of heart-changing grace, and remaining ſtill the ſame as ever, in their corrupt temper, return with eagerneſs to the vices which they had formerly indulged, but which pangs of conſcience forced them, for a while, to give up; and ſo are like the dog that licks up the vomit, which he diſcharged while it offended his ſtomach; and like the ſow that was waſhed, and returns with pleaſure to wallowing in the mire! O how much better would it have been for ſuch people to have never known the way of righteouſneſs, than in this manner to abuſe their knowledge of it! Their condition, after all, is inexpreſſibly more miſerable and hopeleſs than ever it was before; while the Lord knows how to deliver the godly out of temptation.

CHAP. III.

The apoſtle declares the deſign of this epiſtle to be the ſame with that of the former, to remind them of Chriſt's final coming to judgment, 1, 2. *Obſerves that ſcoffers at Chriſt's ſecond coming were to be expected under the goſpel-ſtate,* 3, 4. *Confutes their vain and inſulting objections againſt it, and ſhews that he will certainly appear at unawares, when the preſent frame of nature will be diſſolved by fire,* 5,—10. *And infers from thence, and from the new ſtate of things that will then be introduced, the neceſſity of holineſs, patience, and ſtedfaſtneſs in the faith,* 11,—18.

TEXT.

THIS ſecond epiſtle, beloved, I now write unto you; in *both* which I ſtir up your pure minds by way of remembrance:

PARAPHRASE.

THE principal deſign of this ſecond epiſtle, which I now write to you, my dear brethren in the Lord, beloved of him and me for his ſake, is much the ſame with *that* of the former; in both which I would excite the attention and caution of ſincere ſouls among you, that are not yet corrupted in the faith, but need to be armed againſt falſe teachers, by reminding and ſolemnly warning ſuch of you, again and again, (*chap.* i. 13.) of their deſtructive ſchemes and attempts to overthrow your faith and hope, holineſs and joy.

2 That ye may be mindful of the words which were ſpoken before by the holy prophets, and of the commandment of us the apoſtles of the Lord and Saviour:

2 I am earneſtly deſirous that ye may bear in mind, and ſeriouſly reflect upon, the predictions and doctrines, which were delivered in former times by *holy men of God, who ſpake as they were moved by the Holy Ghoſt;* (chap. i. 21.) and were more lately confirmed by the commandment, which we, the inſpired apoſtles of our Lord Jeſus, the King and Saviour of the church, have received from him, and delivered in word and writing to you, as about other things, ſo particularly about his ſecond coming to judgment, (*chap.* i. 16.) that ye may be fortified againſt the pernicious influence of ſecret and open ſeducers, and not be ſtumbled at them.

3 Knowing this firſt, that there ſhall come in the laſt

3 Eſpecially ſince ye have been forewarned, and may well know, (*Jude*, ver. 17, 18.) that in this laſt age of God's diſpenſations toward the church, there would

laſt days ſcoffers, walking after their own luſts,

would ariſe among them profane deſpiſers and deriders of the moſt important points of divine revelation; men, who in the courſe of their lives give themſelves up to, and follow their own carnal devices and corrupt inclinations, paſſions, and appetites.

4 And ſaying, Where is the promiſe of his coming? for ſince the fathers fell aſleep, all things continue as *they were* from the beginning of the creation.

4 And under the power of infidelity, they are continually ſaying in a way of taunt, jeer, and inſult, like thoſe ancient ſcorners, *Let him make ſpeed and haſten his work, that we may ſee it.* (Iſa. v. 19.) What is become of the promiſe of your Lord's appearing, as Judge of the world, (*ver.* 7.) to put an end to the preſent frame of nature; and to take vengeance on his enemies, and deliver his followers out of all their troubles, which ye Chriſtians ſo confidently talk of, and expect on the foot of divine predictions? Where is there any ſign of this? Do not ye plainly ſee that it is all fancy and deluſion, and that there is nothing in it? For ever ſince the days of our fathers, who, ye ſay, had the promiſe of it, and foretold it, but who are long ago dead and gone, or, as ye call it, fallen aſleep to awake again at the general reſurrection, all things in the whole courſe of nature continue, without any remarkable alteration, juſt the ſame as they were, even from the beginning of the world to this very day. Thus theſe mockers vainly argue that, becauſe Chriſt is not yet come to judgment, he never will: But all this reaſoning and ridicule is entirely groundleſs and mere trifling; it proceeds only from the blindneſs and perverſeneſs of their own corrupt minds and hearts.

5 For this they willingly are ignorant of, that by the word of God the heavens were of old, and the earth ſtanding out of the water, and in the water:

5 For they wilfully ſhut their eyes againſt the ſcripture-account of the great things, that God has done in his own time, which might ſatisfy them, that as all things are poſſible to him; ſo no argument can be drawn againſt his never doing what he has not yet ſeen fit to do: They will not ſeriouſly conſider, as they ought, that, after an immenſe duration from all eternity had run out, he by a ſovereign almighty command, ſaying, *Let it be ſo, and it was ſo*, created, above four thouſand years ago, the aerial heavens, (ſee the note on *ver.* 7.) with all the waters in the firmament; and the earth, conſiſting of land and ſea, raiſing the dry land above the ſurface of the ſea, to which he ſet bounds, (*Gen.* i. 6,—10. and *Pſ.* civ. 9.) and placing ſome part of the earth under the waters, and encompaſſing and moiſtening the reſt with them, that the dry land might not crumble to pieces.

6 Whereby the world that then was, being overflowed with water, periſhed.

6 By means of which waters from the heavens above and the great deep below, the old world, after it had continued in the ſame ſtate about ſixteen hundred and fifty-ſix years, was overflowed; and all mankind, except

cept eight perſons (ſee the note on *chap.* ii. 5.) were utterly deſtroyed by the univerſal deluge; (*Gen.* vii. 11,—23.) So that there is no room to pretend, that *all things continue as they were from the beginning of the creation;* or that any length of forbearance can prevent an accompliſhment of the prophecies of Chriſt's coming to judge the world at the laſt day; which will bring a more terrible deſtruction upon the wicked, than was ſuffered by *Noah*'s flood, after it had been foretold an hundred and twenty years. (*Gen.* vi. 3.)

7 But the heavens and the earth which are now, by the ſame word are kept in ſtore, reſerved unto fire againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men.

7 But the aerial heavens * and this earth, as ſubſiſting in their preſent form, are kept in their courſes as ſecure as a treaſure, (τεθησαυρισμενοι εισι) according to God's promiſe, (*Gen.* viii. 22.) by the ſame powerful and effective word of command, which at firſt created, and afterward brought deſtruction upon them: But they are ſo far from being deſigned to abide for ever, that they are only reſerved for the appointed ſeaſon of their final diſſolution, which will be, not by water, as before, (*Gen.* ix. 9,—11.) but by an univerſal conflagration, that will ſet them all on fire, and conſume them at the general judgment of the great day; which will certainly be the moſt dreadful that ever was known to all impious ſcoffers at it, and to all that fear not God, and deſpiſe the only Saviour, who are reſerved for deſtruction againſt that awful day.

8 But, beloved, be not ignorant of this one thing, That one day *is* with the Lord as a thouſand years, and a thouſand years as one day.

8 But, though ungodly men raiſe objections againſt the promiſe of Chriſt's coming to judgment, as if it never would be fulfilled, becauſe ſo long a time is already paſt without any viſible appearance of it; (*ver.* 4.) and though, *becauſe ſentence againſt their evil works is not ſpeedily executed; their hearts are fully ſet in them to do evil;* (Eccleſ. viii. 11.) Yet, my dear Chriſtian-brethren, whom I conſider as beloved of the Lord, I would not have you ſtrangers to, or unmindful of this one thought, which is enough to confute their vain and ignorant cavils, and to quiet your own minds, namely, that with the eternal Jehovah, who is *from everlaſting to everlaſting God*, and beholds all things, paſt, preſent, and to come, in one comprehenſive

NOTE.

* By *the heavens*, as I take it, is meant here, and in *ver.* 5. the *aerial heaven*, the *plural* being put, by an analogy of number, for the *ſingular*, as it frequently is in other places: (ſee the note on *Matth.* xxi. 7.) For the heavens and the earth are here ſpoken of in oppoſition to thoſe of the old world, which could mean nothing more than the earth and its former atmoſphere, the ſtate of which underwent a great alteration by the flood; and as the waters of the heavens and the earth were a preparation of materials for the univerſal deluge, ſo are the fiery comets in the air, and ſubterraneous fires in the earth for the univerſal conflagration of the world, which will not be till the day of judgment. (See Dr. *Whitby*'s note.)

comprehensive view, *a day* and *a thousand years* are equally but as a point of time, compared with his own immense duration, without beginning, change, or end, (*Ps.* xc. 2, 4.) and that, in his account, the longest succession of years is infinitely less than a single day is in our ways of reckoning, for fulfilling his purposes and promises; the precise time of which he has fixed, but reserved as a secret in his own breast.

9 The Lord is not slack concerning his promise, (as some men count slackness) but is long-suffering to us-ward, not willing that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

9 As to the great promise in particular, which we are speaking of, the Lord is not dilatory in performing it, as some libertines impiously suggest, to discredit the thing itself; or, as some of his own people may be apt to think, through the workings of too much impatience and unbelief, under their present burdens of sin and sorrow: But it may be said in this case, as in a prophecy of the Messiah's days, (*Hab.* ii. 3.) *The vision is yet for an appointed time; but at the end it shall speak and not lie: Though it tarry, wait for it; because it will surely come, it will not tarry* one moment beyond its set time: And what some scoffers may count such a delay, as defeats all expectation of the event, is only an exercise of the kind long-suffering and forbearance of God towards us, * who are the objects of his special love, that the whole

NOTE.

* As the persons here meant by *all*, are such as the apostle ranked himself with, and are apparently all along in this chapter, distinguished from *scoffers* and *ungodly men*, (ver. 3, 7.) God's *not willing that any should perish*, &c. seems to refer to those who are often called *beloved* in the context, and particularly in the preceding verse, which may naturally include, at least, their being *beloved of God*, as it is expressed *Rom.* i. 7.; and who had been spoken of as *having obtained like precious faith* at the beginning of this epistle, (*chap.* i. 1.) and styled *elect according to the foreknowledge of God the Father.* (1 Epist. i. 2.) And as it cannot reasonably be thought that the long-suffering of God was designed for the salvation of those *scoffers* and *ungodly men*, who are reserved for destruction, together with the heavens and the earth, against the day of judgment: (*ver.* 7.) So his *long-suffering to us-ward* may best be understood as relating to *the elect*, inclusive of those of them that were still to be called in their successive generations, who as one body, or one sort of people, may be spoken of by the apostle in the first person plural, as the whole church, inclusive of those that shall be alive at the second coming of Christ, are in 1 *Thess.* iv. 15, 17. (See the note there, and the paraphrase on *Matth.* xxiv. 22.) Accordingly, the design of God in his long-suffering toward *them* is, *that none* of them *should perish, but that all* of them *should come to repentance* in their proper season. Or, if instead of *to us-ward* (εις ημας) we admit of the reading of the *Alexandrian* and *Stevens*'s copies, which have it *for you*, or *for your sakes*, (δι' υμας) and are followed by the *Syriac*, *Ethiopic*, and several other versions, (vide *Mil.* in loc.) it amounts to much the same.—But if, after all, any will insist upon it, that what the apostle here says is to be extended to *mankind* in general, its meaning, on this supposition, may be, as Messrs *Craddock* and *Pyle* have given it, that the Lord defers his coming in his great long-suffering and patience toward sinners, to afford all of them the utmost opportunities of seeing their errors, and reforming their practices; it being his gracious design to do all, that his justice and goodness will permit, for their salvation; or he not being willing, so far as may consist with his infinite wisdom, justice, and goodness, that any should perish, but that all should come to repentance.

whole number of our body, who belong to the *election of grace*, (Rom. xi. 5.) may be called in their ſeveral generations; he having determined in his eternal wiſdom and will, that none of theſe ſhould periſh with the ſcoffers and ungodly before mentioned; (*ver.* 3, 7.) but that all and every one of them ſhould be turned from their iniquities, and be brought, by his grace, to that evangelical repentance, which is to life and ſalvation. (*ver.* 15.)

10 But the day of the Lord will come as a thief in the night; in the which the heavens ſhall paſs away with a great noiſe, and the elements ſhall melt with fervent heat, the earth alſo and the works that are therein ſhall be burnt up.

10 But how long ſoever God may defer the day of final reckoning and retribution, which may be emphatically ſtyled *the great day*, (Jude, *ver.* 6.) *the day of the Lord Jeſus*, and *the day of Chriſt*, (1 Cor. i. 8. and v. 5. 2 Cor. i. 14. and Phil. i. 6, 10.) as he will then appear in all his glory to judge the world, this ſolemn day or time will certainly come in its appointed ſeaſon, and *that* at unawares, as ſuddenly and unexpectedly to all, and with as much terror to the wicked, as a thief's breaking into a man's houſe in the dead of the night, while he is faſt aſleep, and has no thought about it. An awful day this will be to the conſternation and ruin of thoſe that are not prepared for it, in which the preſent ſtate of the aerial heavens will come to a period, (ſee the note on *ver.* 7.) by an univerſal convulſion of all nature with a rapid motion and horrid roar, like a violent ſtorm or tempeſt, and all the component principles of elementary ſubſtances ſhall melt, like wax, through exceſſive heat, in the general conflagration; and this earth with all its rich and ſtately furniture of nature and art, which carnal men place their happineſs in, ſhall be burnt to aſhes.

11 Seeing then that all theſe things ſhall be diſſolved, what manner of perſons ought ye to be in *all* holy converſation and godlineſs,

11 Since therefore it is certain that the preſent frame of this world, and all its ſenſitive enjoyments, ſhall be thus amazingly and entirely reduced to a diſſolution; how ſhould your *affections*, who profeſs to *be riſen with Chriſt, be ſet on things above, and not on things of the earth?* (Col. iii. 1, 2.) And with what watchfulneſs, care, and circumſpection ought ye to behave in all manner of purity and holineſs of heart and life toward God and man, and in the exerciſe of every grace, and diſcharge of every religious duty, with ſtedfaſtneſs, perſeverance, and increaſing fervour, during your ſhort and uncertain abode in the body?

12 Looking for, and haſting unto the coming of the day of God, wherein the heavens being on fire ſhall be diſſolved, and the elements

12 How important and becoming is this for perſons of your character, who are expecting, looking, longing, and tending in your earneſt prayers, deſires, hopes, and preparations for the time, when that final deciſive day of the Lord Jeſus ſhall come according to divine appointment, in which, as has been obſerved,

(*ver.*

elements ſhall melt with fervent heat?

(*ver.* 10.) the aerial heavens being all in a flame ſhall be deſtroyed, and all the conſtituent principles of the atmoſphere, together with the earth and all things in it, ſhall be melted down by an intenſe diſſolving heat, into a confuſed chaos, like that, out of which they were originally formed? (*Gen.* i. 2.)

13 Nevertheleſs we, according to his promiſe, look for new heavens, and a new earth, wherein dwelleth righteouſneſs.

13 Nevertheleſs, as the particles of matter, that compoſe thoſe bodies, will not be annihilated, though wonderfully altered from what they are in their preſent contexture; we, who believe in Jeſus, are ſupported under preſent calamities, and awful proſpects of this tremendous *cataſtrophe*, with joyful hopes of its turning to our unſpeakable happineſs and glory; while, according to the true and faithful promiſe of our God, (*If.* lxv. 17. and lxvi. 22.) * we expect and long for a glorious and refining change of the preſent ſtate of things, which for its excellency, as the product of the like almighty power and goodneſs that created this world, may well be ſtyled *new heavens* and *a new earth*, in which will be nothing that defiles, but all ſpotleſs purity; and in which none but righteous and holy perſons ſhall dwell for ever. (*Rev.* xxi. 27.)

14 Wherefore, beloved, ſeeing that ye look for ſuch things, be diligent that ye may be found of him in peace, without ſpot, and blameleſs:

14 Therefore, my beloved brethren, ſince, on the foot of divine revelation, ye earneſtly deſire, and juſtly hope for ſuch a glorious and bleſſed alteration of the whole frame of nature, when Chriſt ſhall come to judge the world at the laſt day, let it be your utmoſt care and endeavour, through grace, to behave as becomes the expectants of ſuch wonderful events, that ye may meet the Lord Jeſus, whenever they come to paſs, without terror, and may be found by him as your Judge, and in him with acceptance, comfort, and holy boldneſs, as waſhed in his blood, and ſanctified by his Spirit; and ſo may be, not like thoſe that are *ſpots and blemiſhes* to Chriſtian ſocieties; (*chap.* ii. 13.) but may appear before him *holy and without blemiſh*, free from all defilement, as well as condemnation. (*Eph.* v. 27.)

NOTE.

* *New heavens and a new earth*, in the ſtyle of the Prophet *Iſaiah*, are ſtrong figures to repreſent the glorious change, that ſhould be made in the affairs of the church under the goſpel-diſpenſation, with an ultimate reference to the much more glorious ſtate of things that we look for, as to be introduced at the laſt day: And, poſſibly, *new heavens and a new earth*, or a more refined and excellent nature than the preſent, may in a *literal* ſenſe be created, out of the diſſolved materials, to be the habitation of the ſaints for ever. But, whatever the meaning be, they are to *ſucceed* the diſſolution of the preſent frame of the heavens and the earth by fire, and the day of judgment; (*ver.* 10,—13) and therefore ſeem to have no relation to the thouſand years of Chriſt's glorious reign on earth, which is to *precede* theſe great events. (See the note on *Rev.* xxi. 1.)

15 And account *that* the long-suffering of our Lord *is* salvation, even as our beloved brother Paul also, according to the wisdom given unto him, hath written unto you;

15 And to encourage you hereunto, set it down as a sure principle in your own minds, that the great patience and long forbearance of our Lord towards a sinful world, which his enemies, to countenance their unbelief of his ever coming, call *slackness*, is really designed for, tends to, and shall issue in, not only your own complete salvation, but likewise in the salvation of the whole number of God's elect: (see the note on *ver.* 9.) And the point I have been principally insisting upon is quite agreeable to what our dearly beloved brother in the Lord, and my fellow apostle *Paul*, has also delivered in his epistle to professing Christians of your own nation, * (*Heb.* ix. 27, 28. and x. 36, 37.) which he wrote under divine inspiration, according to the eminent knowledge that God gave him, in which he *was not a whit behind the very chiefest apostles.* (2 Cor. xi. 5.)

16 As also in all *his* epistles, speaking in them of these things: in which are some things hard to be understood, which they that are unlearned and unstable wrest, as *they do* also the other scriptures, unto their own destruction.

16 He has also more or less intimated things of this nature in the generality of his other epistles, in which he warns *Jews*, as well as *Gentiles*, against false teachers and seducers; and speaks of God's long-suffering; of Christ's second coming and its momentous consequences; and of believers patiently waiting for it, and the like: Among which things (ἐν αἷς) there are, as he himself says to those *Jews* that were *dull of hearing*, (Heb. v. 11.) some doctrines, which though certain truths, and as plain in themselves as their sublime and spiritual nature well admit of, are not easily apprehended and received by weak and prejudiced minds; and which, through the darkness, pride, and corruptions of men's own hearts, they that are not taught of God by his Spirit †, but are unskilful

NOTES.

* *Hath written to you* is generally understood as referring to the epistle to the *Hebrews*, by most commentators, who take the apostle *Peter*'s epistles to have been wrote to the converted *Jews*. But some, who take it to have been wrote to the converted *Gentiles*, suppose the reference is to those epistles to *Gentile* churches in *Asia Minor*, to which the apostle *Paul* wrote.—But our apostle seems to refer to some one of *Paul*'s epistles in particular, with a distinction of it from *all his other* epistles; and I cannot but think that several passages in our apostle's two epistles immediately point to *Jewish* Christians; (see the preface to this first epistle) and that the reference is more probably to the general epistle to the *Hebrews*, than to any epistle that was directed to only one particular church.

† *They that are unlearned* do not here mean *illiterate* persons, according to our common use of that word: But it is to be understood of those that are strangers to all true principles of religion, or fluctuating in their notions about it, through the corruptions of their own hearts; and so some things in the apostle *Paul*'s writings were hard for them to understand, because they could not relish them, as well as that there were others of too spiritual and sublime a nature for their injudicious and carnal minds to take in, or indeed for any finite mind fully to comprehend. But this is no argument either against *the perspicuity* of scripture, especially in things that are necessary to salvation, or against *the common people's reading them:* For though the apostle says, that *some things* in *Paul*'s epistles, he does not say that

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ful in the word of righteousness, or are sceptical and unsettled in their principles, wrack and torture to a wrong meaning, and pervert the sense and use of them, as they likewise do many other passages of holy writ, both of the Old and New Testament, to their own eternal perdition with high aggravations of their guilt, instead of receiving them with meekness and improving them, as means of *making them wise to salvation, through faith in Christ Jesus.* (2 Tim. iii. 15.)

17 Ye therefore, beloved, seeing ye know *these things* before, beware, lest ye also, being led away with the error of the wicked, fall from your own stedfastness.

17 Since therefore ye, my dear brethren, are forewarned of all these things, and so fore-armed against crafty seducers; and since ye know beforehand, that Christ will certainly come to judgment, and take vengeance upon all the ungodly; have a care lest any of you being drawn aside, (συναπαχθεντες) with other apostates, from him, and from the way of truth and holiness, by the false notions, deceitful insinuations, and vile practices (ἀθεσμων) of impious, immoral, and lawless men, ye fall from your own stability in the doctrines, purity, and profession of the gospel, in which ye have hitherto persisted.

18 But grow in grace, and *in* the knowledge of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. To him *be* glory both now and for ever. Amen.

18 But to help you against all declensions, and revolts, let it be your earnest prayer, and endeavour, in the use of all proper means, to be progressive in daily exercises and increases of every Christian grace, as also in an abiding sense of the free love and favour of God, according to the gospel; and in a clear, fiducial, practical, and experimental acquaintance with the person and offices, doctrines, promises, and commandments of our divine Lord and all-sufficient Saviour Jesus Christ, and with your own personal interest in him. To whom be ascribed, as is most justly due, all adoration, worship, and honour, henceforth and for ever. May we, together with all the saints and angels, sincerely add, in testimony of our approbation, hope, and assurance of its being so, *Amen!*

RECOLLECTIONS.

What need have we to be often reminded of the doctrines and commandments, that are delivered to us by our Lord Jesus and his inspired prophets and apostles; and to be cautioned against the errors and evil practices of wicked and designing men, that we may not be unsettled in our religious principles by them! And how important is it to believers, for preventing this evil, that they grow in grace, and in the knowledge of Christ, all their days! The great doctrines of divine revelation are evidently confirmed by the harmony of inspired writings, both of the Old

NOTE.

the epistles themselves, or that *many*, much less *all* of them, *are hard to be understood*, but gives an honourable testimony to him and his epistles, as his *beloved brother*, who had wrote them *according to the wisdom that God had given him*: And it is supposed that these *unlearned persons* did *read them*, or at least *heard them read*, which he does not blame them for, but only for their making a bad use of them, as many do of the best and most necessary things in the world, by perverting them to their own destruction.

Old and New Teſtament; and yet, alas! How many are there who, through wilful blindneſs and prejudices, ridicule, and raiſe groundleſs objections againſt the moſt intereſting points of faith, like that of Chriſt's coming to judgment! And how many that have not learnt the firſt principles of the oracles of God, but are of a ſceptical temper, and pervert the plain meaning of various ſcriptures to their own deſtruction! But the word of the Lord ſtands faſt for ever; and the promiſe of Chriſt's ſecond coming ſhall certainly be fulfilled in its appointed ſeaſon, to the joy of the ſaints, and the confuſion of ſinners. As this world was once deſtroyed by a univerſal deluge of water; ſo the whole ſyſtem of its preſent frame ſhall hereafter be ſet on fire, diſſolved and burnt up by a univerſal blaze of melting heat, to which it is reſerved againſt the day of judgment, and perdition of ungodly men, who ſhall be tormented for ever with unquenchable flames. But O what a magnificent ſtate of bliſs and glory in the new heavens and new earth, all refined, pure, and holy, ſhall the habitation of the righteous be, without any mixture of ſin, or ſinners! How ſoon this finiſhing day will come, the Lord only knows; but it certainly will come, and *that* as ſuddenly and unexpectedly as a thief in the night, with terrible ſurprize to all that ſhall be unprepared for it. Some indeed would ſuſpect that, becauſe it is hitherto deferred, it never will be at all. Vain and fooliſh thought! A thouſand years are infinitely leſs in the account of the eternal and unchangeable God, than one day is in ours; and what may ſeem to be a *delay* in the opinion of ſome, is only his *long-forbearance and patience* towards a ſinful world, till all his elect be gathered in, that none of them may periſh, but all and every one of them may be brought to ſaving repentance. Since therefore we, who believe in Jeſus, know that there will be a total diſſolution of this world and of all things in it; how circumſpect, holy, and religious, weaned from the preſent life and all its concerns, ought we to be in our temper and behaviour! And ſince we deſire and expect a perfect ſtate of happineſs in that eminent day of the Lord, and are forewarned of deceivers, that would turn us aſide from him and from our way to heaven; how ſolicitous ſhould we be for conſtant ſupplies of grace to enable us ſo to walk with God, as to find favour and acceptance with him in the beloved, till we be preſented holy and unblameable in his ſight through Jeſus Chriſt! To whom be glory and honour through all ages, and for ever. *Amen.*

A PRAC-

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE FIRST EPISTLE GENERAL OF THE APOSTLE JOHN, IN THE FORM OF A PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE FIRST EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THOUGH *the name* of the writer of this, and the two following ſhort epiſtles, be not prefixed to them; there is nevertheleſs no room to doubt but that it was the apoſtle *John*, whoſe name is no more mentioned in his *goſpel*, than in either of theſe epiſtles. All antiquity aſcribes *the firſt* of them to him; and it was not long before *the other two* were generally eſteemed canonical, and received as ſuch; and the great ſimilitude, and even fameneſs of phraſeology and ſpirit, that runs through them all and his goſpel, carry their own evidence of their being wrote by the ſame hand: Accordingly they caſt a good light one upon another; and many paſſages of theſe epiſtles may be cleared up, by comparing them together, and with the evangeliſt.

The *place* from whence, and the *time* when, they were written, cannot be fully determined; but they ſeem to have been ſent from *Epheſus*, or ſome part of *Aſia* the leſs, where this apoſtle chiefly laboured, and before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*, as may be conjectured from his ſpeaking of *the laſt time* as *then come*, chap. ii. 18. which probably relates to the laſt period of the *Jewiſh* church and ſtate, and the commencement of the goſpel diſpenſation, which is the laſt, and ſhall remain to the end of the world; and from his mentioning many *antichriſts* and *falſe teachers*, as already appearing, which our Lord foretold would ariſe before the deſolation of the temple, *chap.* ii. 18. and iv. 1. compared with *Matth.* xxiv. 24.

The *perſons*, to whom this epiſtle was wrote, were not any *particular* church, but *all Chriſtians in general* of that age, perhaps, principally *Jews*, but inclusive of *Gentiles*, with a view to all ſucceeding generations; on which account it is called *a general epiſtle*. And the

the immediate *occasion* of writing it appears to have been taken from the pernicious efforts of judaizing and antichristian teachers, who had broached many gross errors in doctrine and practice, and were the fore-runners of others, who the apostle foresaw, by the spirit of prophecy, would rise in after-ages, to corrupt and trouble the church under *papal* tyranny, superstition, and idolatry: In opposition to all which, our apostle's chief design was to establish believers in the faith of Christ's being the Son of God, and the true Messiah; to lead them into affecting views of the love of the Father in sending him, and bestowing the most glorious benefits upon them on his account; and thereby engaging their love to him and to one another, and sweetly constraining them to depart from all iniquity, and yield a chearful obedience to all divine commandments, answerable to their high privileges, hopes, and obligations.

He begins with giving them the strongest evidence of the truth of what he delivered to them concerning Christ, that they might share, and rejoice with himself and his fellow-apostles, in their happy communion with the Father and the Son; and reminds them of their imperfection through indwelling sin, and at the same time of the necessity of departing from the practice of it, *chap.* i. He then comforts them under a sense of the disallowed sin that still remained in them; but shews that, if they were real Christians, their freedom from its dominion must be demonstrated, by their unfeigned obedience to God's commands, by their love to the brethren, and sitting loose from this world; and by watching and guarding against seducers, in virtue of the anointings of the Spirit which they were favoured with, *chap.* ii. He thereupon breaks out into a rapturous admiration of the love of God in making them his children; and infers from their hope of perfect holiness and happiness with Christ, that they ought to abstain from all iniquity, and live after a holy rate, and in a cordial affection to all their Christian brethren, as those that are born of God, and have an irreconcileable aversion to sin, *chap.* iii. From hence he proceeds to caution them against hearkening to every pretender to the Spirit, and shews how to distinguish the spirit of truth and of error; and adds various arguments to excite their brotherly love. *chap.* iv. Sets before them the efficacy of evangelical love, as springing from faith in Christ, whose divine and saving character is attested by three unexceptionable witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, together with that which believers have in themselves; assures them that all their prayers, according to the will of God, shall be answered; that they who are born of God shall be preserved from the evil one, and are happily distinguished from the world which lies in wickedness; and concludes with an exhortation to renounce all idolatry, *chap.* v.

CHAP.

CHAP. I.

The apostle prefaces his epistle to believers in general with evident testimonies to Christ, for promoting their happiness and joy, 1,—4. Shews the necessity of a life of holiness, in order to communion with God, and relieves them under a sense of in-dwelling sin, which they ought humbly to acknowledge still remains with them; but from which there is an all-cleansing virtue in the blood of Jesus, 5,—10.

TEXT.

THAT which was from the beginning, which we have heard, which we have seen with our eyes, which we have looked upon, and our hands have handled of the word of life;

PARAPHRASE.

THE design of this epistle is to set forth what I and other apostles of our Lord are fully assured of, upon undeniable evidence, and cannot but testify, (*Acts* iv. 20.) concerning the person and saving office of Christ. This *divine person*, who in his original nature was, before all worlds, * truly and properly God, the same in essence with, though distinct in personality from God the Father; whom, when he was made flesh and dwelt amongst us, (*John* i. 1, 2, 14. see the notes there) we often heard in his public preaching and private discourses; whom we also have seen with our own eyes, as at numberless times *before*, so again and again *after* his death and resurrection; whom we have attentively and delightfully considered on various occasions, and whose *glory we beheld, as the glory of the only begotten of the Father, full of grace and truth.* (John i. 14.) And even *after*, as well as *before* his resurrection from the dead, we had all desireable opportunities of touching and feeling him with our own hands; (*Luke* xxiv. 39. and *John* xx. 27.) and so had all possible demonstration of the reality of his risen human body, as consisting of flesh and bones, which he had assumed into personal union with himself, who is styled both *the Word* and *the Life*, (John i. 1, 4.) as he is the living *personal* Word of God, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is the fountain and author of the life of all creatures, and

NOTE.

* Though *from the beginning*, (απ' αρχης) and *in the beginning* (εν αρχη) as we have it *John* i. 1. are somewhat different expressions; yet as Christ is here styled in the next verse *eternal life*, it is natural to take in his *eternal existence*, correspondent to this apostle's assertion of it, *John* i 1.: And *ye have known him that is from the beginning*, (απ' αρχης) chap. ii 13, 14. (see the note there) whether applied to the Father or Son, evidently relates to his *eternal existence*; and our apostle speaks of *names that were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world*, (απο καταβολης κοσμου) Rev xvii 8. which I think means *from eternity*. Accordingly we may take *that which was from the beginning* to relate to *the eternal deity of Christ*, rather than to *the beginning of the gospel-dispensation*, though it may bear the last of these senses in some other parts of this epistle.

and particularly of all spiritual and eternal life to his people.

2 (For the life was manifested. and we have seen *it*, and bear witness, and shew unto you that eternal life which was with the Father, and was manifested unto us;)

2 (For he in whom is life, and who is the life-giver, (*John* i. 4.) was *God manifested in the flesh;* (1 Tim. iii. 16.) and we, his apostles, have actually seen and conversed with him in his human nature; and, as authorised by his immediate commission, do bear our testimony to him in all his characters, and discover to you his divine person and offices, who had originally and eternally life in himself, and was from all eternity co-existent with God the Father, and was conspicuously made known to us *in the fulness of time*, in which *God sent* him *forth*, as *his own Son*, *made of a woman*, *made under the law*, *&c.* Gal. iv. 4, 5.)

3 That which we have seen and heard, declare we unto you, that ye also may have fellowship with us: and truly our fellowship *is* with the Father, and with his Son Jesus Christ.

3 *That*, I say, which we, in the manner but now mentioned, have both seen and heard of him, and in which it was impossible for us to be mistaken, we now publish and make known to you, to the end that ye, who believe in him, may have a partnership and communion, as one spiritual and holy body with us, in all the gracious promises, ordinances and influences, blessings and privileges, that belong to the gospel-state, and that we ourselves are admitted to: And this is a communion of the most excellent, honourable, and heavenly nature, richly worth your coming into; it being in reality a communion with God the Father himself in all the blessings of his love, which are communicated to us through Jesus Christ, his eternal Son; and with this dear Son of the Father in all the blessings of his purchase, as, through him, we are *children and heirs of God*, *and joint heirs with Christ*, (Rom. viii. 16, 17.) *and have access through him by one Spirit to the Father;* (Eph. ii. 18.) and so have communion with the Holy Spirit too, in all his graces and comforts, (2 *Cor.* xiii. 14.) which is the earnest of the heavenly inheritance; where we shall have the most intimate and blissful communion with the sacred Three in all their glory for ever.

4 And these things write we unto you, that your joy may be full.

4 And our aim in writing these great things to you is, that ye may have a fulness of solid satisfaction and rejoicing in this delightful and holy communion, which makes up the noblest pleasure we are capable of, till it be perfected in heaven.

5 This then is the message which we have heard of him, and declare unto you, that God is light, and in him is no darkness at all.

5 Now, in order to your having the joy of this excellent communion, and being partakers of all the blessings of it, ye ought to know what God is, and who they are that shall inherit his grand promise (ἡ ἐπαγγελια) of eternal life. (*Chap.* ii. 25.) And the sum of that doctrine concerning his nature and perfections, which we ourselves have heard from the mouth

mouth of our Lord in his miniſtration upon earth, and which, as his meſſengers, we publiſh to you, is this, That God is an abſolutely perfect Spirit, (*Matth.* v. 48. and *John* iv. 24.) infinite in wiſdom, purity, bleſſedneſs, and glory, and in all other adorable excellencies, that can be comprehended in an idea of the moſt illuſtrious, amiable, and all-penetrating light; and in him there is not the leaſt defect of any kind, or mixture of any thing contrary, or unſuitable to his perfect rectitude, who utterly abhors all iniquity. (See *Habak.* i. 13. and *Pſ.* v. 4, 5.)

6 If we ſay that we have fellowſhip with him, and walk in darkneſs, we lie, and do not the truth:

6 It is therefore a plain conſequence from hence, that if any of us, who bear the Chriſtian name, pretend to be admitted to comfortable communion with God, and hope of enjoying him, who is ſo unſpottedly pure and holy; and if, at the ſame, we live in the practice of any known ſin, which involves ignorance and error, and is the worſt of all darkneſs in us, (*Rom.* xiii. 12. and *Eph.* v. 8.) but is open to his all-ſeeing eye; (*Heb.* iv. 13.) we are inſincere in that profeſſion, and practically give the lie to it, and in works deny it; (*Tit.* i. 16.) and we ſpeak and act in direct contradiction to the nature and will of God, who is truth itſelf, and to the whole tenor and deſign of the goſpel-revelation, or of his word, which is truth; (*John* xvii. 17.) yea, directly contrary to the very nature and truth of things, which render it impoſſible that righteouſneſs ſhould have any fellowſhip with unrighteouſneſs, or light with darkneſs. (2 *Cor.* vi. 14.)

7 But if we walk in the light, as he is in the light, we have fellowſhip one with another, and the blood of Jeſus Chriſt his Son cleanſeth us from all ſin.

7 But if, according to our profeſſion, we, as children of light, (1 *Theſſ.* v. 5.) do indeed live and walk, under the guidance and influence of the Spirit, in ways of truth and holineſs, in the light of goſpel-revelation, and in reſemblance of him, who dwells in immortal light, (1 *Tim.* vi. 16.) and has ſaid, *Be ye holy; for I am holy.* (1 Pet. i. 16.) We then have the beſt of all communion, he with us, and we with him, in which all true believers ſhare as fellow-Chriſtians: And one great bleſſing, and even the foundation, of this communion is, that the precious atoning blood of Jeſus Chriſt, who is both the anointed Saviour, and the eternal eminently beloved Son of the Father, is continually efficacious for cleanſing us from the guilt, condemnation, and power of all our ſins; and, at length, from all remaining defilement and in-being of ſin, which, for his ſake, ſhall be entirely purged away, and have no more place in us, or bad effects upon us; but we ſhall be as like as poſſible to him, when *we ſhall ſee him as he is.* (Chap. iii. 2.)

8 If we say that we have no sin, we deceive ourselves, and the truth is not in us.

8 However, as sin came into the world with us, and cannot be utterly extirpated till we die out of it, if any of us, who pretend to be cleansed by the blood of Christ, are so ignorant, proud, and vain, as to imagine that, in this present state of weakness and mortality by reason of sin, we are so thoroughly cleansed from it, as to have no remainders of its workings in us, we certainly deceive our own souls; and neither the truth of God's word, which abundantly declares the contrary, nor any true light of knowledge, grace, or holiness is found in us.

9 If we confess our sins, he is faithful, and just to forgive us our sins, and to cleanse us from all unrighteousness.

9 If, on the other hand, we, under a humbling sense of our imperfections and many disallowed failures, acknowledge our transgressions to the Lord, and confess them with faith in Christ's propitiatory sacrifice for the forgiveness of them, and with penitential shame and contrition, abhorrence of them, and full purpose of heart, by his grace, to forsake them, (*Prov.* xxviii. 13.) as all the iniquities of *Israel* were confessed over the head of the scape-goat, and *they afflicted their souls* in reflection upon them, (*Lev.* xvi. 21, 29, 30.) he is so true and faithful to his promise to the Redeemer, and to those that believe in him; (*Isa.* liii. 11. and *Heb.* viii. 12.) and is so just to the merit of his blood, (*Rom.* iii. 26.) as for his sake freely to pardon all our sins of omission and commission, in thought, word, and deed, and purge our consciences from guilt; and to cleanse us from the reigning power and defilement of all our iniquities by the sanctification of the Spirit, which was purchased by the blood of his Son to purify our hearts and lives, that we may be fit for communion with him in this world, till we be *presented faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy* in the world to come. (*Jude*, ver. 24.)

10 If we say that we have not sinned, we make him a liar, and his word is not in us.

10 If, after all, we assert that we have not transgressed the law of God, so as to need pardon through the blood, and sanctification by the Spirit of Christ, we, in effect, make God himself a liar, as we therein deny the truth of what he has said in his word, which pronounces upon the whole race of mankind, that *all have sinned, and come short of the glory of God;* (Rom. iii. 23) and we thereby shew that the truth of the gospel has no place in us, the very nature of which supposes us to be sinners, and is designed to bring us to a humble, penitent confession of sin; (*ver.* 9.) and to faith in the Redeemer's blood for the remission of it, (*ver.* 7.) and for victory over it, till we shall be completely delivered from the whole of sin in that heavenly *Jerusalem, into which nothing shall*

shall enter that defiles, or works abomination, or makes a lie. (Rev. xxi. 27.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

What inconteſtible evidence have we from faithful eye and ear-witneſſes of the truth of the goſpel revelation, concerning Chriſt and the benefits brought in by him! And what a bleſſed communion are true believers hereby led into with God the Father, and his only begotten Son, who, as a divine perſon, was ever living with him, and as the incarnate Saviour is the author of eternal life to them! And O the fulneſs of joy that abounds in them, who are partakers of theſe bleſſings! But as God is infinitely pure and holy, and poſſeſſed of all exalted and amiable perfections, that can go into the notion of the moſt illuſtrious light, and is abſolutely abhorrent of all iniquity, and free from every kind of defect; it is vain ſelf-deluſion, and directly contrary to him, to his word, to the nature of things, and to the truth of the goſpel, for any who live in a courſe of ſin, which is the worſt of all darkneſs, to imagine, or pretend, that they have communion with him. And, on the other hand, it is as vain and ſelf-deceiving, and as directly giving the lie to God himſelf, in the declarations of his word, for any to think or ſay, that they are entirely free from all remainder of ſin, in this frail and mortal ſtate. But if, with humble acknowledgments of indwelling ſin, and of our need of a Saviour, and with faith in him, we conſcientiouſly confeſs and depart from all iniquity, and walk, under the guidance and influence of the Spirit, in the light of truth and holineſs, conformable to the nature, will, and commandments of God, who is light; we really have communion with him, a fundamental part of which is, that the infinitely precious blood of Chriſt, his beloved Son, is effectually applied to us for the remiſſion of all our ſins, and for ſubduing their power in us: And God is ſo faithful to his promiſe, and juſt to the merit of his Son, as to paſs by our tranſgreſſions for his ſake, and gradually ſanctify and cleanſe us from all iniquity; till, at length, in a better world, we ſhall *be holy, and without blemiſh; not having ſpot, or wrinkle, or any ſuch thing.*

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle directs believers to the advocacy and atonement of Chriſt for help and relief againſt ſinful infirmities, 1, 2. *Deſcribes the effects of a ſaving knowledge of, and union with him, as productive of obedience and love to the brethren,* 3,—11. *Addreſſes Chriſtians under the various characters of little children, young men, and fathers,* 12,—14. *Cautions them all againſt inordinate love of this world, and antichriſtian errors,* 15,—23. *And encourages them to ſtand faſt in the faith and holineſs of the goſpel, according to the light and influence of the ſpiritual unction, which they had received,* 24,—29.

TEXT.

MY little children, theſe things write I unto you, that ye ſin not. And if any man

PARAPHRASE.

THE deſign of what I have thus far wrote (*chap.* i.) is to caution you, whom I conſider with all affection, endearment, and tenderneſs, as though ye were the young offſpring of my own bowels, * to take

NOTE.

* *My little children* is an appellation by which our apoſtle often addreſſes the *whole body* of theſe Chriſtians; and ſo it is *moſtly* to be underſtood, not as a term of diſtinction of younger and weaker, from older and ſtronger believers, as in *ver.* 12, 13 (ſee the note there) but as a term of tenderneſs and endearment, as our

man sin, we have an advocate with the Father, Jesus Christ the righteous:

take heed of giving way to any known iniquity, or of falling into it through surprise or temptation, much more of living in the practice of it: And it is with this further view, that, as we all have sinned, and remainders of corruption still attend us; (*chap.* i. 8, 10.) so, to prevent your despairing of mercy on that account, ye may consider that, * when any of us, who believe, fall, through infirmity and temptation, into one or another transgression, (*For there is not a just man upon earth that doth good, and sinneth not*, Eccles. vii. 20.) we have a glorious and ever-prevailing intercessor to plead our cause, with his and our Father, *the Judge of all*, (Heb. xii. 23.) against the charges of law and justice, and the accusations of Satan, that our iniquities may not be charged and punished upon us according to their deserts, nor be suffered to prevail and reign in us, as they do in others: And this advocate is no less than Jesus Christ, *the Lord our righteousness*, (Jer. xxiii. 6.) who is perfectly holy and righteous in himself, and has wrought out an everlasting righteousness for us, which he presents before the throne in his intercession on our behalf.

2 And he is the propitiation for our sins: and not for ours only, but also for *the sins of* the whole world.

2 And we may safely depend upon, and take the comfort of his interest with God the Father for us, as all his advocacy is founded on the effectual atonement he has made, to the full satisfaction of divine justice, that we may be forgiven all trespasses, and none of them may have dominion over us: And his atonement is not only for our sins, who are of *Jewish* extract, and have already believed; but also for the sins, not indeed of the whole race of mankind, since he prays not for them all universally, (*John* xvii. 9.) and multitudes of them perish in and by their iniquities; but for the sins of all, for whom he is an advocate, (*ver.* 1.) and who do, or shall hereafter believe in him, (*John* xvii. 20.) even *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*, wherefoever they be scattered abroad through the whole world. (See the notes on *John* i. 29, and iii. 16.)

3 And

NOTES.

our blessed Lord himself used it to his disciples, *John* xiii. 33. And perhaps many whom the apostle wrote to were converted by his ministry, which engaged his most affectionate love to them; and as he was by this time an old man, it was the more decent, and befitting his age, to speak to all believers under this title.

* The particle (ἐαν) rendered *if* frequently signifies *when*, and particularly in the style of our apostle, as in *John* xii. 32. (see the note there) and xiv. 3. and xvi. 7. And *Calvin* on this place thinks, that it ought to be resolved into a *causal* particle, because it cannot be but that we should sin; and so the apostle confirms what he had been saying, *chap.* i. 8. about sin's remaining in true believers themselves, who are far from being perfect in holiness.

3 And hereby we do know that we know him, if we keep his commandments.

3 And it is evident to us, that we have a true and saving knowledge * of Christ, which includes faith in him and love to him, if it has a powerful influence to engage us unto a sincere, chearful, and unreserved obedience to whatever he has commanded, both in the precepts of the moral law, and in the institutions of the gospel. (*John* xv. 14.)

4 He that saith, I know him, and keepeth not his commandments, is a liar, and the truth is not in him.

4 Whoever he be that pretends to say, † I have known, loved, and believed in him, and have had communion with him, (*chap.* i. 6.) and yet makes no conscience of keeping his holy commandments, that man speaks what is utterly false, and inconsistent with his ever having had an effectual knowledge of him: He gives the lie to his own profession, and to the word of God; and there is neither sincerity in his assertions, nor the truth of grace, or of the gospel in his heart.

5 But whoso keepeth his word, in him verily is the love of God perfected: hereby know we that we are in him.

5 But whoever duly regards, holds fast, and carefully observes the doctrines, ordinances, and duties contained in the word of the Lord, he is undoubtedly under the eminently governing influence of that sincere and supreme love to God, which, under a sense of his love, constrains him to keep his commandments, and not count them grievous. (*Chap.* v. 3. and see the note on *chap.* iv. 12.) When it is thus with us, we are hereby well assured, that we are vitally united to Christ, and interested in all his benefits.

6 He that saith he abideth in him, ought himself also so to walk, even as he walked.

6 Keeping his word is so closely connected with our union and communion with him, that every one who professes a special interest in him, as one that dwells in him, (*John* vi. 56.) and would make it out to himself and others, is indispensibly obliged to live and act in the course of his conversation after Christ's own example, and to *tread in his steps*, by a holy and humble imitation of him. (1 *Pet.* ii. 21.)

7 Brethren, I write no new command-

7 In my so earnestly pressing you, dear Christian brethren, to an imitation of Christ, and *that* with regard

NOTES.

* *Knowledge* is sometimes put for, or is at least inclusive of *faith*, as in *Isa.* liii. 11. and *John* xvii 3.; and at others, of *approbation*, or *love*; (see the note on *Matth.* vii. 23.) and our context leads us to understand it here of such a fiducial, affectionate, and practical knowledge, as is necessary to *fellowship* with Christ and a personal interest in his *propitiation*.—And that *Christ* is the person here referred to, appears from his being the *immediate* antecedent: accordingly I take him to be meant all along in the three following verses, though he be not expressly mentioned again in either of them; and yet he is plainly pointed out in *ver.* 6.

† *I know him*, is in the *Greek*, (εγνωκα) *I have known him*: And the apostle's saying, that if he who pretends to this, *keeps not his commandments, he is a liar, and the truth is not in him*, intimates that he never had the true knowledge of Christ, or the truth of faith, or of any other grace in him, but was a hypocritical professor; otherwise, it would certainly have had a better effect upon him.

mandment unto you, but an old commandment which ye had from the beginning: the old commandment is the word which ye have heard from the beginning.

gard to the great duty of *love*, which I am in a special manner going to recommend to you, (*ver.* 8,—11.) I do not write about any commandment that is entirely new; but remind you of a divine precept, which, for the substance of it, was delivered, as of perpetual obligation, long ago, even as long as the beginning of the Old Testament revelation; and which ye were taught, with additional light and enforcements, at the first publication of the gospel among you. (See the note on *John* xiii. 34.) This ancient commandment, which is contained in the law given by *Moses*, (Lev. xix. 17, 18.) and inforced by our blessed Lord in the beginning of his ministry, is what ye heard in the word, that was preached to you at your very first believing, and entering upon the profession of his name.

8 Again, a new commandment I write unto you, which thing is true in him and in you: because the darkness is past, and the true light now shineth.

8 But to give you a larger and still more striking view of it, I now again write to explain the excellent duty of *brotherly love;* and to inculcate it upon you under new obligations, motives, encouragements, assistances, and endearments, to inforce it, and to raise it to a higher degree of spiritual, extensive, and cordial affection, according to Christ's new injunction of it, (*Matth.* v. 43, 44.) than ever was known or practised before; and with regard thereunto it may be called a new commandment, which is eminently copied out with the greatest truth and evidence in Christ, who in his transcendent love has set you the brightest example of it, and which is imitated to a good degree in you, who *are taught of God to love one another;* (1 Thess. iv. 9.) because the darkness of the Old Testament dispensation, and of your former state of ignorance, error, and sin, passes away, (παραγεται) and in great measure is over and gone, and the clear light of the truth of the gospel in the revelation it makes of Christ, who is by way of eminence *the true light*, (John i. 9.) is now displayed in its full glory, and shines in your hearts. (2 *Cor.* iv. 6.)

9 He that saith he is in the light, and hateth his brother, is in darkness even until now.

9 He therefore who professes to believe the gospel, and to be enlightened in the knowledge of Christ, and purified by that means, and at the same time is under the power of an uncharitable, malicious, and revengeful temper towards his Christian-brother, is a stranger to evangelical light and grace, and remains in a state of sin and error, which is the worst of all darkness, to this very day.

10 He that loveth his brother abideth in the light, and there is none occasion of stumbling in him.

10 On the contrary, the believer who has a cordial affectionate love to his brother for Christ's sake, in imitation of him, under the constraints of his love, and in obedience to his commands, really is, and shews that he continues to be, enlightened and renew-

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ed by the grace of the gospel according to his profession of it; and there is no room for taking offence at him, who lays no stumbling-block before his brethren, nor is apt to take offence at them; nor will any difficulties he may meet with, in the way of his duty, be a stumbling-block to himself, to hinder his chearfully persisting in it: For *great peace have they that love God's law, and nothing shall offend them.* (Ps. cxix. 165.)

11 But he that hateth his brother is in darkness, and walketh in darkness, and knoweth not whither he goeth, because that darkness hath blinded his eyes.

11 But, as I said before, (*ver.* 9.) and now repeat it, the more deeply to impress it upon your consciences, every professor of Christ's name that harbours a severe unfriendly disposition, and indulges prejudices in his heart against his brother, is still in an unregenerate state, destitute of saving knowledge, and under the power of sin; and, be his pretences what they will, he hereby shews that he goes on in such errors and evil courses as are spiritual darkness itself; and doth not understand the way that leads to eternal life, or the way in which he should walk to the glory of God, and his own and others good; nor doth he discern and consider the sad tendency and dismal consequence of his pernicious sentiments and practices, because of the natural blindness of his heart; (*Eph.* iv. 18. and 2 *Cor.* iv. 3, 4.)

12 I write unto you, little children, because your sins are forgiven you for his name's sake.

12 The admonitions, cautions, and encouragements which I have given, especially about the great duty of love, and shall still further give you, are such as equally concern you all, whatever be the different degrees of your gifts and graces, or of your rank and standing in Christianity. As to those of you that are young converts, or for weakness of faith and understanding, and all other religious attainments are but as *babes in Christ*, (1 Cor. iii. 1.) * and are apt to be

NOTE.

* *Beza*, *Piscator*, and many expositors following them, apprehend that the apostle does not begin his distribution of Christians into the several classes of *fathers*, *young men*, *and little children*, till he comes to the next verse, because the *Greek* word, (τεκνια) here rendered *little children*, is different from that in the original, (παιδια) which is so rendered in the 13th verse. But this criticism, I doubt, is scarce sufficient to support its design, since the last of these words (παιδια) is evidently used, *ver.* 18. and *John* xxi. 5. in the same sense as the first (τεκνια) is in several other parts of this epistle. I therefore rather incline to think that they are here and in the 13th verse to be taken, as carrying much the same meaning, to describe the lower rank of Christians; and that the apostle begins his distinction of the several ages of believers in this verse, and repeats it just in the same order in the two following verses, which appears more natural, than to suppose that he drops *little children*, and mentions only *fathers* and *young men* in the first distribution of the several ranks of Christians, for which, as far as I see, no good reason can be given. And were the verses (which are of modern invention) better divided, so as to join *two thirds* of the former part of the 13th to the 12th verse, and *the last clause* of the 13th to the 14th, or to begin the 14th verse with that clause, the natural order of the apostle's

be mightily concerned about pardon of sin, as little children commonly are about forgiveness from their offended parents; I write to you, because, though your faith be ever so weak, yet, being sincere, all your trespasses, as well as those of stronger believers, are freely forgiven of God, (*Col.* ii. 13.) for the praise of the glory of his grace, and for the sake of Jesus Christ, through the merit of his atoning blood, in whose name this great benefit has been preached, and is conveyed to you. (*Luke* xxiv. 47. and *Acts* xiii. 38.) Ye therefore should *love much, because much is forgiven you.* (Luke vii. 47.)

13 I write unto you, fathers, because ye have known him that is from the beginning. I write unto you, young men, because ye have overcome the wicked one. I write unto you, little children, because ye have known the Father.

14 I have written unto you, fathers, because ye have known him *that is* from the beginning. I have written unto you, young men, because ye are strong, and the word of God abideth in you, and ye have overcome the wicked one.

13, 14 As to those of you that are of long standing in Christianity, and have attained a large stock of knowledge and experience, like old men and fathers, who delight to hear and speak of, search into, and reflect upon ancient things; I write to you, fathers in Christ, because ye have been a great while acquainted with, and your thoughts are much employed about *the Ancient of Days*, (Dan. vii. 9.) * even God the Father and his co-eternal Son, (1 *John* i. 1.) together with their eternal counsels and designs according to the gospel-revelation of them. Ye therefore, whose hearts are so much taken up with the eternal love of the Father and Son, ought to abound in the exercise of this grace. As to those of you, who, for zeal, activity, and spiritual attainments, are like young men that are come to the strength and vigour of their age, and fit for military exploits; (see *Mark* xiv. 51.) I write these things to you, because, being *strong in the Lord, and in the power of his might*, (Eph. vi. 10.) ye have encountered, wrestled against, and obtained glorious victories over your great *adversary the devil*, that vile, apostate, wicked spirit, *who walks about, as a roaring lion, seeking whom he may devour.* (1 Pet. v. 8.) And as ye *are conquerors* only *through him that loved you*, (Rom. viii. 37.) ye ought to love him, and your brethren for his sake.—To impress these things the more deeply upon you severally, *I now say again*, (see Gal. i. 9.) I write

NOTES.

postle's way of ranging these different degrees of Christians would have appeared with more propriety and exactness.—And in what he writes to them severally, there seems to be a beautiful allusion to such sort of things as are most generally suited to the taste of mankind in these different stages of life, as suggested in the paraphrase, according to Dr. *Goodwin*'s observation, (Vol. IV. p. 177. &c. 2d part) though he makes *little children* in this verse to relate to *Christians in common.*

* Whether by *him that is from the beginning* we understand *the Father*, or *the Son*, which I have put both ways, leaving the reader to his choice, the apostle speaks of *the existence* of the person here intended as *from the beginning*, (ἀπ' ἀρχῆς) which, in either case, was *eternally* before the beginning of the gospel. (See the note on *chap.* i. 1.)

I write them to those of you who are but newly born of God, or are like infants, who usually, first of all, learn to know and love their parents; because ye have been brought to a fiducial, affectionate knowledge of God, as your heavenly Father in and through his beloved Son. I have also wrote these things to those of you, who, like fathers, are far advanced in knowledge and grace, by means of your long study, observation, and experience, and who take pleasure in meditating upon the deep things of God; because ye have, with great judgment, faith, and love, understood much of him, and of his purposes and contrivances for your salvation, which, like himself, are from everlasting. (*Eph.* i. 4.) And I have wrote these things to those of you who, like young men, are grown up to maturity in spiritual growth and liveliness for action; because, being *strong in the grace that is in Christ Jesus*, (2 Tim. ii. 1.) and *strengthened with might by his Spirit in the inner man*, (Eph. iii. 16.) ye are enabled to perform the most difficult duties, and the word of God, according to the gospel-revelation, has deep root, and continues to work effectually in you; (1 *Thess.* ii. 13.) and by wielding this sword of the Spirit, (*Eph.* vi. 17.) with the hand of faith, ye have defeated and gained signal conquests over the great enemy of your souls, and all his wicked instruments that would have perverted you.

15 Love not the world, neither the things that are in the world. If any man love the world, the love of the Father is not in him.

15 But, whether your standing and progress in religion be more, or less, I would caution all and every one of you to take heed, that, in consistence with a subordinate love which is due to some persons and things, your affections be so weaned from, and mortified to this present evil world, as never to think that here is your rest; nor to be entangled with, engrossed by, or inordinately carried out after, any of its allurements, of what nature or kind soever, as though your portion for happiness lay in them. If there be any among you, whose heart is supremely set upon this world, he neither has any true love to God, the Father of Christ, and of all true believers in him, who will admit of no competitor or rival, (*Matth.* vi. 24.) and reckons *that* to be no true love to him at all, which is not supreme *; nor has such an one any claim to, or right sense of the love of God to him in his own soul.

16 For all that is in the world, the

16 For how enticing soever the things of this world be to the irregular desires of men's hearts;

NOTE.

* *The love of the Father* may relate either to his love to us, as in *chap.* iii. 16. and iv. 9. or to our love to him, as in *chap.* iii. 17. and v. 3.

the lust of the flesh, and the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life, is not of the Father, but is of the world.

whether its *pleasures*, that are suited to gratify lewd, intemperate, and luxurious inclinations; or its riches, estates, and possessions, that are looked upon with a greedy wish and covetous eye, which cannot be satisfied by them; (*Eccles.* iv. 8.) or its honours, dignities, and preferments, grand houses, furniture, and equipages, and the like, which feed the lust of ambition, and are very tempting to the natural pride of men's hearts, and carry them into all the vanity of a gay, pompous, and splendid way of living: So far forth as any of these are perverted, and prove ensnaring to the affections; this is not according to the original design of the Father of mercies in giving them; nor is it the product of his love to his children, or of theirs to him: No, nor can he be the approver, or author of it; but it all proceeds from the malignant influence of the things of this world upon men's carnal hearts, and their own corrupt inclinations to them.

17 And the world passeth away, and the lust thereof: but he that doth the will of God abideth for ever.

17 And still further to arm you against all temptations, and take off all inordinate affections from things on earth, (*Col.* iii. 2.) ye ought to consider what an uncertain, unsatisfying, fading, and perishing thing this world is; that it is continually fleeting and changing hands while we are in it; and that even its best things are very precarious and transitory, and will soon come to an end; and so will all our present inclinations and desires towards it, and gratifications by its pleasures, riches, and honours, as we in a little time shall have nothing farther to do with it; (1 *Cor.* vi. 13. and vii. 29,—31) and then all that set their hearts upon it shall perish with it. But the true lover of God, who is wrought into a conformity to his holy will, as made known in his word; and who, from a principle of faith, as working by love, persists in a governing course of obedience to it, is possessed of substantial, satisfying, and abiding realities; stands with everlasting continuance in the love of God, and in a state of grace; and shall live for ever in full possession of all durable and heavenly happiness.

18 Little children, it is the last time: and as ye have heard that antichrist shall come, even now are there many antichrists; whereby we know that it is the last time.

18 My dearly beloved children, (see the note on *ver.* 1) it is proper for me to remind you, that the *Jewish* dispensation is just now expiring, and the last dispensation of grace, which is to continue to the end of time, has now commenced: And as ye have been told in the predictions of our Lord and his apostles, (*Matth.* xxiv. 11, 24, 25. 2 *Thess.* ii. 3,—10. and 1 *Tim* iv. 1.) that deceivers would arise and set themselves against him; even so, many of this malignant spirit are already risen up in the world, as

forerunners

forerunners of the utter destruction of the *Jewish* temple and city, state and polity, and of that greatest of all antichrists, who will assume the authority of Christ, and set himself up in opposition to him. (See the note on 2 *Thess.* ii. 4.) By this remarkable event, as it now begins to appear, we may be well assured that we are come to the very last hour of the *Jewish* state, and are entered upon the last dispensation of mercy, that God will ever afford to this sinful world; and so may be the better confirmed in the truth of those divine predictions, and the better fortified against the errors of these seducers, who make a profession of Christianity to cover their vile designs, but are really apostates from it.

19 They went out from us, but they were not of us: for if they had been of us, they would no doubt have continued with us: but *they went out*, that they might be made manifest, that they were not all of us.

19 They, for a while, made plausible appearances of being sincere converts, and were in communion with the churches of Christ; and afterward departed from the faith, and went out from amongst us to broach their corrupt notions; but they really never were in good earnest of the same mind and heart with us: For if they had been true believers, renewed by grace, and of the same spirit with ourselves, there is no question to be made, but that they would still have persevered in the doctrines of Christ and his apostles, and continued in communion with us. But they revolted from the faith and fellowship of the gospel, and separated themselves that they might appear to the church and the world in their true colours, for a warning to some, a caution to others, and a brand of infamy upon themselves, as mere hypocrites or false-hearted professors, which too often creep into the visible church; and that, under all their flourishing pretences, it might be known that none of their fraternity were true believers, vitally united to Christ together with us.

20 But ye have an unction from the holy One, and ye know all things.

20 But as to those of you that have not been carried away with their errors, ye have a rich unction of the Spirit in his gifts and graces, which belongs to you, as *kings and priests unto God*, (Rev. i. 6.) and is shed abundantly upon you through Jesus Christ, your exalted Saviour, who is by way of eminence *the Holy One*, (Dan. ix. 24. Acts iii. 14. and Rev. iii. 7.) and who, as mediator and head of the church, was anointed with the Holy Ghost above measure; (*John* iii. 34. and *Acts* x. 38.) and, in virtue of his death and ascension to heaven, communicates light and grace, according to the measure of his gift, to all his living members: (*Eph.* iv. 7.) And ye through this spiritual anointing, are led into an experimental and practical knowledge of every thing that is necessary

sary for your preservation from the deceit of these seducers, and for your own eternal salvation.

21 I have not written unto you, because ye know not the truth: but because ye know it, and that no lie is of the truth.

21 The reason, therefore * of my having wrote to you on this head, is not from any suspicion as though ye were unacquainted with the truth of the gospel, and particularly with its grand fundamental doctrine, concerning Jesus Christ as the true Messiah, (*ver.* 22.) which your unction supposes ye cannot be ignorant of; but the reason of my writing is to remind you of, and still further confirm and establish you in the truth, which I do with the greatest pleasure and confidence of success, because ye already know, believe, and prize it; and are well assured that nothing contrary to it can be true, and that no fraud, deceit, or error, like what these impostors go into, can proceed from it, or be consistent with it, but is as contrary to the pure gospel, as any lie can be to truth itself.

22 Who is a liar, but he that denieth that Jesus is the Christ? he is antichrist that denieth the Father and the Son.

22 Who, of all others, is to be deemed an impostor, cheat, and false teacher, but he who denies our Lord Jesus to be *come in the flesh*, (see the note on chap. iv. 3.) as the true Messiah, whom the prophets foretold, and he declared himself to be, with the attestation of miracles to confirm it, and whom God his Father publicly owned as such? (*Matth.* iii. 17.) That man is to be looked upon, as one that directly opposes Christ, and deservedly bears the name of *antichrist*, who, notwithstanding all this strong and complicated evidence, denies the Father, as *the Father;* and the Son, as *the Son;* and denies that God the Father has sent him into the world as the promised Messiah, and his beloved Son.

23 Whosoever denieth the Son, the same hath not the Father: (*but he that acknowledgeth the Son, hath the Father also.*)

23 Whoever he be that denies the divine personality and mediatorial office of the only begotten Son of God, (*chap.* iv. 9. and *John* i. 1, 14.) he denies, not only the Father's testimony to him, as the Messiah, but also, by consequence, denies the Father's divine relation to him as *the Son;* and so takes away the distinguishing *personal* characters of both, and the peculiar glory which belongs to them respectively in the economy of salvation; and has not a true knowledge of the Father, nor a saving interest in him. * But, on the contrary, he who cordially owns, believes, and confesses the Son to be a divine person, and the only Saviour of lost sinners, believes and owns that he is the eternal Son of the Father, and was sent by him; and

NOTE.

* The last part of this verse, which stands in different characters, is wanting in most *Greek* copies, but is supplied from some others of good credit, and from several *versions;* and is reasonably supposed to have been dropt, through carelessness, where it is left out, rather than foistered into the text by a wickedly designed interpolation. Vide *Bez. Est.* and *Mill.* in loc.

and so has a due regard, and pays suitable honour both to the Father and the Son, (*John* v. 23.) and has a right knowledge of the Father, and an interest in his special love and favour through the Son.

24 Let that therefore abide in you, which ye have heard from the beginning. If that which ye have heard from the beginning shall remain in you, ye also shall continue in the Son, and in the Father.

24 See to it therefore that the true doctrine of Christ concerning his Father and himself, be still embraced by you, and fixed as an abiding principle in your hearts, even that doctrine, which ye have been instructed in from the very first publication of the gospel to you. If ye continue to hold *that* fast, and retain it as the engrafted word of God, which ye heard and received at your first acquaintance with the gospel, ye shall prove to be, not merely Christians by visible profession; but shall also abide by faith and love in union and communion with the Son, and with the Father through him, to your complete salvation.

25 And this is the promise that he hath promised us, *even* eternal life.

25 And the grand comprehensive promise, to which all others tend, and in which they shall finally issue, and which Jesus Christ, and the Father through him, has made in the gospel, and will certainly fulfil to us, who thus abide in the Father and Son, is no less than an everlasting life of all perfection and glory, which shall be enjoyed in the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, and in the most intimate beatific union and communion with them, all blissful and transporting!

26 These things have I written unto you concerning them that seduce you.

26 I thought it proper to give you these hints about, and to establish, comfort, and fortify you against persons of an antichristian-spirit, that have already rose up among you, and are endeavouring by subtle and deceitful artifices to corrupt your principles and practice, and to draw you away from the simplicity that is in Christ. (2 *Cor.* xi. 3.)

27 But the anointing which ye have received of him, abideth in you: and ye need not that any man teach you: But as the same anointing teacheth you all things, and is truth and is no lie; and even as it hath taught

27 But I need not insist so largely upon these things, as I otherwise might, because that *unction*, (ver. 20.) consisting of the gifts and graces of the Spirit, which ye have been favoured with, remains as a constant principle within you, to enlighten, guide, and govern you; so that there is no necessity of your being instructed in the first principles of the oracles of God, (*Heb.* vi. 1.) by any man whomsoever; * much less of your being taught by any of these new upstarts, that would carry you off from the pure gospel of Christ:

NOTE.

* *Ye need not that any man teach you* cannot be said with a design of excluding the use of ministerial instruction; for the apostle was at this very time giving it to them (See the note on *Heb.* viii. 11.) But it either relates to their having no need to be taught the fundamental doctrines of the gospel, which they were already well acquainted with; or rather, as I think, to their having no need to be taught any doctrines of Christian religion by these false pretenders to it, who industriously set themselves to pervert it.

taught you, ye shall abide in him.

Christ: But as this holy unction itself leads you into the knowledge of all things necessary to salvation, and is infallibly true, according to the word of God, which *is truth*, (John xvii. 17.) and has no deceit or falsehood in it; and as it has already been effectual to bring you to the knowledge of the truth as it is in Jesus, so by means of its continual influence upon you; ye shall still remain stedfast in Christ, and in the doctrines of his gospel.

28 And now, little children, abide in him; that when he shall appear, we may have confidence, and not be ashamed before him at his coming.

28 And now, to conclude what I have to say upon this head, my dear little children, take heed that ye still adhere to Christ, and abide by the pure doctrine of the gospel concerning him, and by your holy profession of his name, that when he shall appear in all his glory, *the second time, without sin unto salvation*, (Heb. ix. 28.) we, who have ministered the gospel to you, may have the satisfaction of seeing the happy fruit of our labours among you, and may not be disappointed in our hopes concerning you; and that ye yourselves may have boldness, together with us, before him, and not be confounded in the day of judgment; but may be *our glory and crown of rejoicing*, which will be to your own exceeding joy, *in the presence of our Lord Jesus Christ, at his coming*. (1 Thes. ii. 19, 20.)

29 If ye know that he is righteous, ye know that every one that doth righteousness, is born of him.

29 This is the hope we have concerning you now; and since, (ἐαν) as we trust, ye have right thoughts of Christ, as the righteous and holy One, who *loves righteousness and hates iniquity*, (Psal. xlv. 7.) and is the author of all righteousness in others, wherever it is found; ye may from thence assuredly conclude, with an application to yourselves, that every one, who, like him, is a lover and practiser of those things that are right and holy, in imitation of him, and from a principle of faith in, and love to him, is partaker of a divine nature, by his regenerating Spirit, and so is by the new birth, as well as by gracious adoption, (*chap.* iii. 1.) a child of God, and heir of eternal glory. (*Rom.* viii. 14,—17.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How beautifully harmonious is the tendency and design of the gospel, to caution believers against all sin, and to support them under a humbling sense of their former iniquities, and of their present disallowed infirmities! The propitiatory sacrifice of Christ, and his advocacy founded upon it, are extended to all believing sinners of the *Gentiles*, as well as of the *Jews*, through the whole world. But how vainly do any pretend to have a right knowledge of Christ, or true faith in him for their own salvation, if they cast off a conscientious regard to his commandments! They give the lie to their own profession, and to the truth itself, and have no sincere love to him, which would engage them to a holy imitation of him.—The law of love to his people is, for substance, an old commandment, but, for circumstances, suited to the light and grace of the gospel, is a new one; and whatever any one may pretend to, his loving his Christian brother, or not, is a plain test of his either

either being truly enlightened, or remaining under the power of darkneſs. O how happy is their condition, who walk in the light of truth and holineſs, whether they be babes, young men, or fathers in Chriſt! The weakeſt believer is forgiven all treſpaſſes for Chriſt's ſake, and has a filial affection to God as his Father; the more grown Chriſtian is eſtabliſhed in the faith, and has ſtrength from Chriſt for vanquiſhing the temptations of the devil and his inſtruments; and the old experienced Chriſtian is beſt acquainted with the *Ancient of Days*, and his eternal counſels of wiſdom and love. But alas! What an enemy is the love of this world to the love of God! As far as we are carried away with pleaſures, riches, or honours, which are all precarious, empty, and periſhing, ſo far are we eſtranged from the love of God to us; and a predominant love of this world is inconſiſtent with a true love to him, who cannot be the author of any evil influence that the things of fleſh and ſenſe make upon us.—How dangerous are the ſchemes of men of an antichriſtian ſpirit, which has worked in all ages of the church! When profeſſors of Chriſt's name go into it; this makes it evident that they never were ſincere believers; for they would otherwiſe undoubtedly have perſiſted in the faith and fellowſhip of the goſpel. But O what a bleſſed and holy unction of the Spirit have true believers from their exalted Head and Saviour; By this they are well ſatisfied about the truth of all the fundamental articles of the goſpel, inſomuch that they do not need to be always taught the firſt rudiments of Chriſtianity; much leſs to be taught any of its doctrines by falſe pretenders to it. All that deny Jeſus to be the Son of God and the only Saviour, are *antichriſtians*, and conſtructively deny both the Father and Son; but all that cordially believe the doctrine, originally delivered in the goſpel concerning theſe divine perſons, have a ſure intereſt in them both. The great promiſe of eternal life belongs to them; and they, being enabled to perſiſt in their moſt holy faith, continue in union and communion with Chriſt, to their own and their faithful paſtor's joy and confidence, at his ſecond and moſt glorious appearing: And they that have ſuch juſt and impreſſive ſentiments of his purity and holineſs, as produce an effectual change upon them in reſemblance of him, may certainly conclude that they are partakers of a new and ſpiritual birth from him, and have the inheritance of children, even unto eternal life.

CHAP III.

The apoſtle breaks out into admiration of the love of God in making believers his children, 1, 2. *Shews the purifying influence of a hope of ſeeing Chriſt and bearing his likeneſs, and the inconſiſtency of pretending to this hope, and living in ſin*, 3,—10. *Makes love to the brethren, a diſtinguiſhing character of real Chriſtians*, 11,—15. *Deſcribes that love by ſuch of its actings, as prove it to a man's own conſcience to be ſincere*, 16,—21. *And repreſents the advantage of faith, love, and obedience*, 22,—24.

TEXT.

BEHOLD, what manner of love the Father hath beſtowed upon us, that we ſhould be called the ſons of God: therefore the world knoweth us not, becauſe it knew him not.

PARAPHRASE.

BEHOLD, with attention and admiration, gratitude, joy and praiſe, what an affecting and diſtinguiſhing ſort of free and tranſcendent love the eternal Father of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and the Father of mercies in and through him, has vouchſafed to us who are born of God, (*chap.* ii. 29.) that, in the riches of his condeſcenſion and grace, he ſhould put ſuch a high honour upon us, who are in ourſelves altogether worthleſs, mean, vile, and contemptible ſinners, both by nature and practice, as to adopt us

into his family, that we might not only bear the name, but enjoy all the blessings and privileges, which, answerable to our dignity, belong to the regenerated sons of God; (*John* i. 12, 13.) and might be accounted, owned, and dealt with, as such. It need not therefore be wondered at, (*ver.* 13.) that the men of this world, whose hearts are carnal, and averse to all that is good and holy, do not esteem, affect, and own, but rather hate us, who bear his image; because they are ignorant of the true nature of God, and neither approve of, nor acknowledge either the Father, or the Son. (*Chap.* ii. 23.) *

2 Beloved, now are we the sons of God, and it doth not yet appear what we shall be: but we know that when he shall appear, we shall be like him: for we shall see him as he is.

2 But let them think and speak of us as they will; this, beloved of the Lord, and therefore of me, is our comfort and glory, that though our natural, and lamented sinful infirmities be great and many, and the figure we make in life be ever so mean and despicable, and they revile and hate us, yet we actually are already the sons of God, not by nature, as our blessed Lord is, nor merely by creation, as the holy angels are; (*Job* xxxviii. 7.) but by the special grace of regeneration and adoption, and of marriage-union with his essential Son: And so great is the dignity and happiness of this relation, that it is impossible for us, much more for the men of this world, to conceive what sublime riches, honours, and delights we shall hereafter be advanced to, answerable to it. But thus far we know in the light of faith, and by the witness of the Spirit, acccording to the word of God, that when our glorious Lord himself shall appear the second time to salvation, *we shall appear with him in glory;* (Col. iii. 4.) and shall bear his amiable and illustrious image of light and love, holiness and happiness in our souls; and even *our bodies* themselves *shall be fashioned like unto his glorious body:* (Phil. iii. 21.) For we shall be admitted to a beatific and transforming vision, *not in a glass darkly, but face to face;* (1 Cor. xiii. 12.) and shall see and enjoy him in his divine and mediatorial glory, as shining forth in his exalted

NOTE.

* As to *know* often signifies to *approve;* so *not to know* signifies to *disapprove.* (See the notes on *Matth.* vii. 23. and *Rom.* viii. 29.) And *it knew him not* seems to refer to Christ, and the ill treatment he met with in the world, on account of which he said to his disciples, (*John* xv. 18, 19) *If the world hate you, ye know that it hated me before* it hated *you. If ye were of the world, the world would love his own; but because ye are not of the world, but I have chosen you out of the world, therefore the world hates you.* This is parallel to, and casts a light upon, the passage before us, and in *ver.* 13.; and might probably be in the apostle's mind now: And in the following verses, which are immediately connected with this, he manifestly speaks of Christ, pointing him out in such a manner, as necessarily leads our thoughts to him. (See the note on *chap.* ii. 3.)

exalted human nature just as he is. (*John* xvii. 24. see the note on 2 *Cor.* iii. 18.)

3 And every man that hath this hope in him purifieth himself, even as he is pure.

3 And every believer, who has a well-grounded hope of all this, cannot but be influenced by it, while he is in this world, to aim at and endeavour, through divine grace, to attain all possible purity in heart and life, in imitation of, and conformity to him, who is superlatively pure and holy, and will admit of none but holy ones to see his face with comfort. (*Heb.* vii. 26. and xii. 14.)

4 Whosoever committeth sin, transgresseth also the law: for sin is the transgression of the law.

4 Whoever he be that lives in any known sin, as a wilful evil-doer, or worker of iniquity, (ο ποιων αμαρτιαν, see the note on *ver.* 6.) that man not only sinneth against the light, grace, and obligations of the gospel; but, as though he were lawless, goes into a manifest violation even of the moral law, which is holy, just, and good: For the strict and proper notion of sin is a deviation from, or contrariety in thought, word, or deed to, the law of God, that unchangeable rule of righteousness, which is a transcript of his holy nature and will; and *where no law is, there is no transgression.* (Rom. iv. 15.)

5 And ye know that he was manifested to take away our sins: and in him is no sin.

5 And that the allowed practice of any sin is utterly inconsistent with good hope of seeing Christ, and being like him, at his second coming, is evident; for ye know from the whole tenor of the gospel, that he was manifested in the flesh at his first appearing, (ινα) to this very end and purpose, that by the sacrifice of himself he might effectually deliver us from the guilt, and, in consequence thereof, from the power, and, at length, from all defilement and in-being of our sins: And he is, and ever was, so absolutely sinless, as to need no expiation for himself, and as to have no fellowship with them that walk in darkness. (*Chap.* i. 6.)

6 Whosoever abideth in him sinneth not: whosoever sinneth, hath not seen him, neither known him.

6 From hence it plainly follows, that whoever abides in him by vital and influential union and communion with him, as all true believers do, like branches in the vine, (*John* xv. 5.) doth not deliberately, habitually, presumptuously, and willingly sin *: He

T 2 that

NOTE.

* We are not to imagine the apostle's meaning to be, that a true Christian never sins; for this would be to make him directly contradict what he had said, *chap.* i. 8, 9. about *deceiving ourselves, if we say we have no sin,* and about the duty of *confessing our sins,* which supposes us to have occasion so to do; and and therefore *he sinneth not* must be understood in some such sense, as is given in the paraphrase; and is sufficiently explained in several other verses of this context, which we render *committeth sin,* but the expressions in the *Greek* (ποιων, and ποιει αμαρτιαν) are very strong, and signify committing it as *practisers, workers,* or *doers* of it with freedom and choice, like persons who make a trade of it; and it is the very same expression that our Lord used when he said, (*John* viii. 34.) *Whosoever committeth sin* (ο ποιων την αμαρτιαν) *is the servant of sin;* and

that sinneth at this rate, has never had any realizing view by faith of him; nor any experimental and saving acquaintance or communion with him.

7 Little children, let no man deceive you: He that doth righteousness is righteous, even as he is righteous.

7 Take heed, my dear children, that no false pretenders impose upon you, and lead you astray from the path of truth and duty: Set it down as a certain conclusion, that he, and he only, who, from principles of faith and love, conscientiously and habitually works righteousness (ο ποιων την δικαιοσυνην) in his religious behaviour toward God, and upright dealings with men, is both inherently and actively righteous, according to his measure and degree, in imitation of the blessed Jesus, who is the *holy One*, (see the paraphrase on chap. ii. 20.) and loves righteousness, as well as spent his whole life on earth in an invariable practice of it.

8 He that committeth sin, is of the devil: for the devil sinneth from the beginning For this purpose the Son of God was manifested, that he might destroy the works of the devil.

8 He who works iniquity, as one that makes a trade of it, (see the note on *ver.* 6.) is under the power and influence of the devil, bears his odious likeness, and doth his will: For that great enemy of God and souls is an old offender, persisting in a course of all iniquity himself, and practising the wicked art of tempting and exciting others to sin, ever since the beginning of the world, when he sinned, and drew other apostate angels into sin, as also our first parents into their horrible defection from God and his law, to the ruin of themselves, and all their natural offspring in their several generations. And this is so directly contrary to every thing, said and done, or countenanced by Christ, that he, the eternal Son of God, came into the world, and was made known in his saving office, as sent of the Father to this great end and design, that, by his doctrine, obedience, and sufferings unto death, he might dissolve the whole frame of those evil works, sin, misery, and death natural, spiritual, and eternal, which the devil propagates, and carries on, that they, who believe in Christ Jesus, and hope to live with him, and to be like him for ever, (*ver.* 2.) might be delivered from the guilt and dominion of sin, and live no longer in it here; and might, at length, be entirely freed from all remainders of it, and from all its dreadful fruits and effects, for ever hereafter.

9 Whosoever is born of God, doth not commit sin; for his seed remaineth in him: and he cannot sin, because

9 The sum then of what I am saying is this, Whosoever he be that is partaker of a divine nature, by the regenerating Spirit, is no longer a doer or worker of iniquity, like other men, or like the devil, who *sinneth from the beginning*: (ver. 8.) For that divine principle

NOTE.

and our apostle says, ver. 8. *He that committeth sin* (ο ποιων αμαρτιαν) *is of the devil*, and ver. 16. *whosoever is born of God doth not commit sin*, (αμαρτιαν ου ποιει.)

because he is born of God.

principle of grace, which is infused into him, by means of the incorruptible seed of the word, (1 *Pet.* i. 23.) has an abiding root and residence in him, to rule and govern him; and he has such a thorough hatred of all iniquity, that he cannot give himself liberty to sin with deliberation and full consent, as he used to do; (see the note on *ver.* 6.) he cannot love and live in sin; and when, through temptation, surprise, or inadvertence, he at any time falls into it, he cannot but, upon conviction, sorely repent of it, as *David* and *Peter* did, because he, as a child of God, and born of the Spirit, has received a principle of grace, that wills and works in direct opposition to all sin, as sin; (*Gal.* v. 17.) much less can he sin upon the score, or by virtue of his being born of God, as though his new birth were a licence for it, or had any tendency towards it.

10 In this the children of God are manifest, and the children of the devil: whosoever doth not righteousness is not of God, neither he that loveth not his brother.

10 This therefore is the great distinguishing difference, by which they who are truly born of God, and so become his children, and they who are still under the power of the devil, as their Father, to do his works, and live according to his will, (*John* viii. 44.) are openly discovered, known, and proved to be so respectively. Let people's pretences be what they will, it is certain, that whosoever doth not love, and live in the practice of religion and morality, both which may be included in the notion of righteousness, is not born of God, or partaker of the nature of his children; no more is he, who has not a sincere and cordial affection toward his Christian brother, as such.

11 For this is the message that ye heard from the beginning, that we should love one another.

11 For this is one great part of that practical doctrine, which our blessed Lord committed as a charge to us, his apostles and servants, and which we preached, and ye heard and received from the very first publication of the gospel, relating to what he requires of his disciples and followers, (*John* xiii. 34. and xv. 12, 17.) that we, who claim relation to him, and interest in him, should maintain a brotherly affection, and discover it in the best manner, and by all suitable endearments and services, one towards another.

12 Not as Cain, *who* was of that wicked one, and slew his brother: and wherefore slew he him? because his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous.

12 We are by no means to be like *Cain*, the firstborn of our fallen parents, and among all their descendents the first notorious child of the devil, *that* eminently wicked and malicious *murderer from the beginning* of the world; (*John* viii. 44.) and under the power of whose malignant influence, as he *works in the children of disobedience*, (Eph. ii. 2.) *Cain* cruelly murdered his brother *Abel*. And what was the reason of his contriving and committing that monstrously unlawful and barbarous act of violence against him? Why, truly, it was only because he himself was

was a wicked wretch, and, his services not being duly performed, God rejected both him and them; and because his brother was a righteous man, and his sacrifice, offered with faith in the Messiah's atonement, was good and acceptable in the sight of God, who had a respect to him and his offering, and shewed it in such a manner, as testified that he was righteous. (*Gen.* iv. 3,—8. and *Heb.* xi. 4. see the note there.)

13 Marvel not, my brethren, if the world hate you.

13 Ye need not therefore wonder, or count it a new or strange thing, my dear brethren, if, as is the case of the present day, the wicked men of this world, who are the seed of the serpent, envy, hate, and persecute you, who are the seed of the woman, between whom and them there is an irreconcileable enmity, (*Gen.* iii. 15.) which soon discovered itself in *Cain*, (ver. 12.) and has worked ever since in the children of disobedience.

14 We know that we have passed from death unto life, because we love the brethren: he that loveth not *his* brother abideth in death.

14 We, through grace, are men of a better spirit, and may be very easy under all the hatred of this world, since God himself loves us, (*ver.* 1.) and since we are translated from a state of law-condemnation to death into a state of justification to eternal life; and are quickened from the death of sin to the life of righteousness: We are well assured that this is our happy case, because our hearts are formed unto an affectionate love of all our brethren in the faith, hope, and fellowship of the gospel, merely upon this consideration, that they belong to Christ, bear his image, and are beloved of him. Whoever, on the contrary, is not effectually engaged from such principles and motives to love his brother in the profession of the gospel, continues still under the power of spiritual death, and in a state of law-condemnation, and lies exposed to everlasting destruction, which is *the second death.* (Rev. xx. 14.)

15 Whosoever hateth his brother is a murderer: and ye know that no murderer hath eternal life abiding in him.

15 Let his pretences be what they will, every one who, instead of cultivating this Christian temper toward his brother, indulges wrath, malice, envy, and revenge, is guilty of the sin of murdering him in his heart; (*Matth.* v. 21, 22.) and such is the rancour of his malignant spirit, that were it left to take its own course, and had it opportunity, it would as surely carry him on to actual murder itself as *Cain*'s did. (*ver.* 12.) And ye know, from all that the word of God says, that no person, who is under the power of such a wicked disposition, much less an actual murderer, who either has not time, or not a heart for *repentance toward God, and faith towards our Lord Jesus Christ*, which are necessary to salvation, (*Acts* xx. 20, 21.) has any right or title to eternal life, or any principle of spiritual life residing in him, or any saving

saving grace, which is the beginning of, and a meetness for, and shall continue to, and issue in eternal life.

16 Hereby perceive we the love of God, because he laid down his life for us: and we ought to lay down *our* lives for the brethren.

16 How contrary is this unmerciful temper to that, which God the Son has shewn towards us; we may conceive something of the greatness of his compassionate love, from the most transcendent instance that could be given of it; since he, who is *the eternal Word*, and *was made flesh*, and so was truly and properly *God* incarnate, (*John* i. 1, 14.) *has loved us and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet-smelling savour*, (Eph. v. 2.) and freely *gave his life a ransom for many.* (Matth. xx. 28.) And we ought to be so deeply affected with, and influenced by this unparalleled love of Christ, as to stand ready after his example, and in imitation of his love, to expose our own lives, whenever he calls us to it, (as the apostle *Paul* did his, *Phil.* ii. 17.) for encouraging the faith and hope of those holy brethren, that have cost him so much, and are so dear to him; and for the preservation and safety of those that are eminently serviceable to his church, (as *Aquila and Priscilla, laid down their own necks for* that great apostle's life. Rom. xvi. 4.)

17 But whoso hath this world's good, and seeth his brother have need, and shutteth up his bowels *of compassion* from him, how dwelleth the love of God in him.

17 But if, instead of copying after this noble pattern of love, any professor of Christ's name, who, through the bounty of Providence, has the conveniences and comforts of this life, see his neighbour, and especially his Christian-brother, in strait and necessitous circumstances, and harden his heart against him; and, like one that has no tenderness or pity for the distressed, will give him no relief, how scandalously short doth he fall of that love, which God requires, and has given the most affecting example of in his Son? How can such an one pretend to an interest in God's love to him, or that the sincere love which God enjoins, and is the author and the object of, and which inclines the heart to a fervent love of the brethren for his sake, has any place in him? (*Jam.* ii. 15, 16.)

18 My little children, let us not love in word, neither in tongue, but in deed, and in truth.

18 Let us take heed, my dear children, that our professions of love to our fellow-Christians be *without dissimulation;* (Rom. xii. 9.) that it be not all compliment without any meaning, nor merely kind expressions, without any suitable affection toward them, or doing what we can for their help and comfort in spiritual and temporal concerns; but let it demonstrate itself in acts of beneficence and service as occasions require, and in all offices of substantial friendship, according to our professions, and the true nature of Christian charity.

19 And

19 And hereby we know that we are of the truth, and shall assure our hearts before him.

19 And by a prevalence of this excellent temper and conduct, we may be well satisfied that *God of his own will has begotten us with the word of truth*, (Jam. i. 18.) and has brought us to understand, believe, and live under the government of the true principles of the gospel, as sincere Christians; and hereupon we shall be enabled to persuade (πεισομεν) our own hearts, that we have such manifest tokens and fruits of his effectual operation upon us, as will embolden our humble appeal to him for our integrity, in his sight and presence, both now and at the day of judgment, whatever censures the world may pass upon us: And this is a sweet and solid joy that frees us from the stinging reproaches of a self-condemning conscience. (2 *Cor.* i. 12.)

20 For if our heart condemn us, God is greater than our heart, and knoweth all things.

20 For if our consciences, which are *the candle of the Lord, searching all the inward parts of the belly*, (Prov. xx. 27.) witness against, accuse, and condemn us for designed or allowed hypocrisy in our professions of love, and of adherence to the truth of the gospel, it is very awful to consider, as we ought, that the heart-searching God is an infinitely higher, more impartial, and critical judge of the true state of our case, and is greater in purity and holiness, as well as in power, to condemn all iniquity, than our own hearts can be; and it is most dreadful of all to be disapproved of him, whose judgment must and will stand for ever, and who has a perfectly comprehensive knowledge of all things, even of the most secret thoughts and intents of the heart. (1 *Kings* viii. 39. and *Rev.* ii. 23.) And therefore he not only confirms the sentence which conscience justly passes in his name; but sees and condemns many things in us, that escape our own observation.

21 Beloved, if our heart condemn us not, *then* have we confidence towards God.

21 But, on the contrary, my dearly beloved, if, while we cannot but be sensible of many lamented imperfections, our own consciences, upon due deliberation under the enlightenings and witnessings of the Spirit, according to the truth of the gospel, acquit us from all charges of reigning or allowed guile; then, in proportion to our conscIousness of this, we may have humble boldness in our claim of God as our God and Father, and in our professions of love to him and our fellow-Christians for his sake, and in an appeal to him, like that of *Peter*, (John xxi. 17.) about the sincerity of our hearts therein; yea, we may have (παῤῥησιαν) a holy freedom, courage, and liberty of soul in our fiducial pleas with him.

22 And whatsoever we ask, we receive of him, because

22 And what good things soever we sincerely and humbly pray for according to his will, with faith in the name of Jesus, and for right ends, (*chap.* v. 14.

John

because we keep his commandments, and do those things that are pleasing in his sight.

John xiv. 13, 14. xvi. 23. and *Jam.* iv. 3.) we are, or in due time shall be partakers of them by his free favour, through his beloved Son, as far as he sees may be most for his glory, and best for us: And we, with holy *David*, (Ps. cxix. 6.) may be humbly confident of this; because, as an evidence of our interest in his favour, we, through the grace bestowed upon us, have an unfeigned *respect to all his commandments*, and endeavour to do such things as are acceptable and well pleasing in his sight, by Jesus Christ. (1 *Pet.* ii. 5.)

23 And this is his commandment, that we should believe on the name of his Son Jesus Christ, and love one another, as he gave us commandment.

23 And this is the great commandment of God, which is fundamental to, and comprehensive of all the rest, that we should heartily embrace and trust in his Son Jesus Christ for ourselves, according to the gospel-revelation of him, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour of lost sinners; and that from this principle of faith in him, as also for proving the truth of it in its *working by love*. (Gal. v. 6.) we should have, and exercise a cordial affection one towards another, as members together of his mystical body, in obedience to the commandment, which he gave to all his disciples. (*John* xiii. 34. and xv. 12.)

24 And he that keepeth his commandments, dwelleth in him, and he in him: and hereby we know that he abideth in us, by the Spirit which he hath given us.

24 And whoever is brought to yield a conscientious obedience to all his commandments, from a principle of faith as working by love, which counts none of them grievous, (*chap.* v. 3.) he really doth, and hereby makes it evident that he doth live in a state of vital union with him, and with the Father through him, and that *Christ dwells in his heart by faith*, who is *a habitation of God through the Spirit*: (Eph. ii. 22. and iii. 17.) And we who stand in this near and happy relation to Christ, and to the Father through him, are assured that he lives with abiding influence in us, by the light, energy, and witness of the Holy Spirit, which he has freely given us, to produce, excite, and assist an exercise of faith and love, and every other grace in our souls.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Who can sufficiently admire, and be affected with the love of God in making such contemptible, ill-deserving creatures as we are, his children by special grace! Though the men of this world despise and hate them, they are already the Sons of God. And who can conceive the dignity and delights which they will be advanced to, when they shall see Christ in all his glory, and be made as like as possible to him! O the happiness of a well-grounded hope of this for ourselves; and of an experience of its purifying effects upon us! These appear in the holy turn that is given to our hearts and lives by a principle of grace, which works in direct opposition to all iniquity, and excites us to all the duties of piety toward God, and righteousness toward men, and to an imitation of the righteous and holy Jesus, who was himself absolutely sinless, and was manifested in our nature to take away our sins, and to destroy the works of the devil, that wicked offender, murderer, and promoter of sin and ruin from the beginning of the world ——Of all the divine commandments, faith and love are the chief; faith as working by love; and love as taking pleasure in keeping every other commandment. And O how important

is it, that, from these noble principles, we affectionately love our Christian brethren, as such; and *that* not in word only, but in deed and in truth, even unto a readiness, if need be, to lay down our lives for their preservation and confirmation in the faith, as Christ, who was truly and properly God incarnate, laid down his own life in his matchless love for our redemption! By these distinguishing characters, and by his Spirit given to us, we may know that we are passed from death to life, and that he abides in us, and we in him; and may be humbly confident toward God, that we have a saving acquaintance with the truth of the gospel; that we are sincere in our profession of it, and are born of God; and that he, in his own time and way, will give us whatsoever we ask of him according to his will. But, alas! How vain are all pretences to these glorious privileges and blessings, if none of the forementioned dispositions, but the contrary prevail in us! If we habitually live in a course of any known sin, as evil-doers; if we are not practisers of righteousness, and, instead of loving, hate the children of God, and *that* because they are more righteous and holy than ourselves; and instead of having bowels of compassion toward them, or relieving their wants, we could willingly persecute them, even unto death, as *Cain* did his righteous brother *Abel*. How can we pretend to have any love to God; or that we are his sons, born of him, or have any true knowledge of him, or any principle of spiritual and eternal life, which no murderer in heart, much less in fact, can have in him? No, no, Let not any man deceive us: These things evidently mark out the children of the devil, in distinction from the children of God; and all such continue under the power of spiritual death, in opposition to them that have eternal life. How much therefore doth it concern every one of us to inquire, in which of these ranks we stand? Whether our consciences acquit, or condemn us in the judgment they pass, upon serious deliberation, about our own state, temper, and way before God? And O how careful ought we to be in forming that judgment concerning ourselves, since the infinitely great and holy God, who knows our hearts, is the supreme Judge of all; and by his judgment we must stand or fall for ever!

CHAP. IV.

The apostle cautions believers against giving heed to every one that pretends to the Spirit, and shews how to distinguish the true from the false claiments of it, 1,—6. *Then returns to his darling topic of brotherly love, as a proper characteristic of sincere Christians, enforcing it upon them by various weighty considerations*, 7, —21.

TEXT.

BELOVED, believe not every spirit, but try the spirits whether they are of God; because many false prophets are gone out into the world.

PARAPHRASE.

TAKE heed, dearly beloved, to whom God has given his Spirit, (*chap.* iii. 24.) that ye hearken not to, and be not seduced by every pretender to the Spirit of God, nor by every doctrine, (*ver.* 2, 3.) that he broaches under colour of extraordinary light and immediate revelation; but, before ye give any credit to, and fall in with those that make such high professions, carefully examine, and prove by the touchstone of the word, (*Isa.* viii. 20.) what manner of spirit they are of, and are are influenced by, and what doctrines they preach; whether they carry plain tokens of their being such, as are agreeable to the holy nature and revealed will of God, and derive their original from him or not. And there is great need of your being very cautious on this head; because there

there are swarms of impostors at this day, who, according to our Lord's prediction, are gone abroad, and make a great noise in the world, endeavouring (*if it were possible*) *to deceive the very elect.* (Matth. xxiv. 24.)

2 Hereby know ye the Spirit of God: every spirit that confesseth that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh, is of God.

2 Now, to give you a certain mark, whereby ye may know who are taught and inspired by the Spirit of God, and who are not, but are acted by a spirit of delusion, or would fallaciously impose upon you; it is necessary for you to observe, that every one, who, under professions of preaching by the light and inspiration of the Spirit, cordially believes, freely owns, and boldly professes his faith in our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, as the eternal Word, who is God, and the only begotten of the Father, and has actually been made flesh, and dwelt amongst us, (*John* i. 1, 14. see the notes there) * and came into an incarnate state to fulfil all righteousness, and take away sin by the sacrifice of himself, and is to be entirely trusted in, as the only true Messiah, for eternal life; such an one really is what he professes to be, and speaks by the authority and inspiration of God according to his mind and will, and is himself born of God.

3 And every spirit that confesseth not that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh is not of God: and this is that *spirit* of antichrist, whereof you have heard that it should come, and even now already is it in the world.

3 And, on the contrary, every pretender to preach by the inspiration of the Spirit, that does not believe and own, but denies that Jesus Christ is the only true Messiah, who, as the eternal Son of God, has assumed a real human body, as well as reasonable soul, and taken upon him the form of a servant, and become obedient unto death, (*Phil.* ii. 7, 8.) for the redemption of his people; such an one is neither sent, nor approved of God, nor enlightened by his Spirit, nor born of him: And the spirit by which he is governed, is that very spirit of opposition to Christ and his gospel, concerning which ye have heard from our Lord and his apostles, as has been already hinted, (*chap.* ii. 18. see the paraphrase there) that it would rise and show itself in the last days; and it has now actually begun to appear and work in the world among the impostors of this day.

NOTE.

* *Every spirit that confesses that Jesus Christ is come in the flesh*, (πας πνευμα ο ομολογει Ιησουν Χριστον εν σαρκι εληλυθοτα) might be more justly rendered *every spirit that confesses Jesus Christ, who has come in the flesh*; and so *Christ himself* is the subject of the confession *in all his characters*, and not barely that particular assertion, *that he is come in the flesh*, which I take to be only such a description of him, as is indeed essential to, and included in, though it be not the whole of, what is to be confessed concerning him: And they who, on the contrary, deny that Christ came to offer up himself as a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice and make atonement for sin, do, in effect, deny him to be come in the flesh for the main purpose for which God, his Father, sent him.

4 Ye are of God, little children, and have overcome them: because greater is he that is in you, than he that is in the world.

4 But ye, my dear children, are born of God, and are taught by *the unction* which ye have received *from the holy One*, even by *the spirit which he has given you*, (chap. ii. 20, 27. and iii. 24.) that ye might not be carried away by their delusions; and ye have been enabled to withstand these impostors, and their errors in doctrine and practice, and to gain a noble conquest over them, by the stedfastness of your faith, profession, and obedience; and ye will still be more than a match for them all, because he, who dwells in you by his Spirit, is infinitely superior, in wisdom and power, to that antichristian spirit which is gone forth into the world, and to Satan himself, under whom it acts, and who *works in the children of disobedience*. (Eph. ii. 2.)

5 They are of the world: therefore speak they of the world, and the world heareth them.

5 These deceivers that think, talk, and act under his influence, are men of carnal minds, *who walk according to the course of this world;* (Eph. ii. 2.) whose views and interests are all of a temporal nature, relating to the riches, honours, and pleasures of this present evil world: They therefore propagate such notions of secular dominion and grandeur under the Messiah, as are agreeable to men of a like worldly temper with themselves; and unregenerate people, who place their happiness in the things of this world, hearken to them, and greedily suck in their corrupt doctrines, as being most suitable, of all others, to their own sensual inclination and taste.

6 We are of God: he that knoweth God heareth us; he that is not of God heareth not us. Hereby know we the Spirit of truth, and the spirit of error.

6 But we, who preach an incarnate and crucified Saviour, are enlightened, approved, sent, and owned, as well as born of God; and therefore every one that truly knows any thing of God, and is well affected toward him, according to the discoveries he has made of himself in Christ by the gospel, diligently attends to, and heartily embraces the divine truths, which we have received by revelation from him: But he that is not born of God, by his enlightening and renewing influence, pays no regard to the spiritual doctrine we deliver concerning Christ, as the only true Messiah, who is come in the flesh; (*ver.* 3.) nor will believe or adhere to us who preach it. This is a distinguishing character, whereby we may easily and clearly discern, on one hand, the Spirit of truth and its preachers, and on the other, the spirit of falsehood and delusion, and what an evil spirit they are under the power of, who propagate antichristian errors, and wicked practices according to them.

7 Beloved, let us love one another: for love is of God; and every

7 Now, to return to what I greatly aim at in this epistle, Let it be our diligent care, beloved of the Lord, and therefore of me, to maintain, express, and shew forth the most sincere and brotherly affection one towards

ry one that loveth, is born of God, and knoweth God.

wards another: For this excellent grace is the fruit of the Spirit, the birth and offspring of God himself, who begets, commands, and approves of it. And every one that cultivates and exemplifies this amiable principle, is a child of God, regenerated by his Spirit; and has an experimental, appropriating, and transforming knowledge of the perfections and will of God, and particularly of his love.

8 He that loveth not, knoweth not God; for God is love.

8 He, on the contrary, that is a stranger to this Christian love, is unacquainted with the nature and will of God. For God * is all love, he is the perfection of it in his propensions, thoughts, purposes, and dispensations of every kind, as though he were nothing but love toward his children, and in his will to promote a like affection in them to one another: He therefore is a complete pattern of it, worthy of our imitation, though it is absolutely impossible for us to come up to any thing near an equality to him in it, as appears, if we only consider the following eminent demonstration of it.

9 In this was manifested the love of God towards us, because that God sent his only begotten Son into the world, that we might live through him.

9 The astonishing, self-moving, and condescending love of the great God to us broke out, and was displayed with the brightest and most affecting evidence in this matchless instance of it, namely, that in the fulness of time, God, according to his eternal purpose of love and grace, sent forth his own divine and only begotten Son, in a way of special operation, into this lower world, to assume human nature into personal union with himself, or to be *made of a woman, made under the law, to redeem them that were under the law,* (Gal. iv. 4, 5.) *that through his merit and righteousness* we, who believe in him, *might not perish, but have everlasting life.* (John iii. 16.)

10 Herein is love, not that we loved God, but that he loved us, and sent his Son *to be* the propitiation for our sins.

10 In this there really was, and most evidently appeared to be be unparalleled love, not to friends, or persons lovely in themselves, but to *enemies, sinners,* and *ungodly* wretches; (*Rom.* v. 6, 8, 10.) not from any consideration or foresight of previous love in us toward him to move him to it, but from his own mere undeserved and preventing love and grace, by which he was beforehand with us; (*ver.* 19.) and, in the greatness of that love, he sent his own supremely beloved and only begotten Son to bleed, suffer, and die in our nature and stead, and thereby make an effectual atonement,

NOTE.

* God is often styled *holy, righteous, just, good,* and *gracious, wise, powerful, true,* and *faithful,* and the like; but I do not recollect that he is ever said, in the *abstract,* to be *holiness, righteousness, justice, goodness,* &c. as he is said to be *love:* Which may intimate, that this is the darling and reigning attribute that sheds a most amiable glory upon all his other perfections, and upon all his designs and performances with regard to his people.

ment, to the full satisfaction of divine justice, for our great and multiplied offences, which otherwise must have been charged and punished upon us to our eternal destruction.

11 Beloved, if God so loved us, we ought also to love one another.

11 How great, ye dearly beloved of God and me, are the constraints of this love! If God loved us at so high and astonishing a rate as this, we, whom he thus loved, and redeemed by the precious blood of his Son, most certainly ought, in imitation of him, and as influenced by his superlative love, to keep up the most ardent affection one towards another, as Christian brethren, for his sake, and in obedience to his commandment. (*ver.* 21.)

12 No man hath seen God at any time. If we love one another, God dwelleth in us, and his love is perfected in us.

12 God himself is an invisible spirit, *whom no man has seen, nor can see* with both bodily eyes, (1 *Tim.* vi. 16.) to move his affection to him; but the objects of his love, who bear his holy image, are visible, daily seen, and conversed with, that we might be induced to testify our love to him, by shewing it for his sake to them. (See *ver.* 20.) If therefore we love one another, as children of his own likeness, this is a proof of our love to him, and it hereby appears that he dwells in us by his Spirit to produce this love; and both his love to us has hereby manifested itself, and attained its end and design to a good degree in us; * and our love to him is hereby brought to its true form, and exercised with eminence, and is proved to be sincere in us.

13 Hereby know we that we dwell in him, and he in us, because he hath given us of his Spirit.

13 By this we have a comfortable evidence of a mutual inhabitation between God and us, of our dwelling by faith and love in union and communion, through Jesus Christ, with him; and of his dwelling by gracious manifestations and influences in our souls; because he has freely afforded us rich communications of his Spirit to beget and animate this faith and love, and to cast a light upon his own work in us.

14 And we have seen and do testify, that the Father sent the Son *to be* the Saviour of the world.

14 And we, the apostles of Christ, have seen him with our bodily eyes (*chap.* i. 1.) in his human nature, preaching, and miracles, sufferings, death, resurrection, and ascension to glory; and we now bear witness, upon infallible evidence, that the eternal Father has actually sent his only begotten Son, to take upon

NOTE.

* *His love* (η αγαπη αυτου) may be considered either *subjectively* for the love that is in him to us, or *objectively*, for the love we have to him. (See the note on *chap.* ii. 15.) But which ever way we take it, *his love being perfected in us*, is not to be understood, as though either his love to us, or ours to him, had in this world completely attained all its ends, and produced the whole of its effects; but both his love and ours may be said to be *perfected in us*, much after the same manner as *his strength* is said to be *made perfect*, or manifested with great advantage *in our weakness*; (2 Cor. xii. 9.) and as *faith* is said to be *made perfect*, or demonstrated to be sincere, genuine, and eminent, *by works*. (James ii. 22.)

upon him our nature; and by the course of obedience and sufferings, which in that humble state he fulfilled, to be the Redeemer and Saviour of both *Jews* and *Gentiles*, that do, or ever shall believe in him throughout the world, (see the note on *John* iii. 16.) according to ancient prophecies, that *the desire of all nations should come*, (Hag. ii. 7.) and that *in him all nations of the earth should be blessed.* (Gen. xxii. 18.)

15 Whosoever shall confess that Jesus is the Son of God, God dwelleth in him, and he in God.

15 Whosoever therefore shall, from a principle of faith, which works by love, boldly own and declare his belief with full assent and consent, in the face of all opposition and danger, in these perilous days, that Jesus is this eminently peculiar Son of God, and the only Saviour of sinners, it is thereby manifest that God dwells in him by his Spirit, which has led him into these just and exalted sentiments of Christ, with a firm adherence to him; and that he dwells in God by faith and love, through the great Mediator.

16 And we have known and believed the love that God hath to us. God is love: and he that dwelleth in love, dwelleth in God, and God in him.

16 And we, who are blessed with an experience of this, have been well assured, and fully persuaded, on the foot of the gospel-revelation, and the concurring witness of the Spirit with our spirits, that the most peculiar, transcendent, free, and distinguishing love is in the heart of God toward us, and is manifested by his *sending his Son to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live through him.* (ver. 9, 10.) By this it plainly appears, as has been observed, (*ver.* 8. see the note there) that God is all love to us, and there is no fury in him against us; and we may certainly conclude from thence, that whoever lives under the power of a hearty love to him, and to his children for his sake, is so assimulated to the God of love, as to abide in a reciprocal union and communion with him.

17 Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment: because as he is, so are we in this world.

17 By our thus dwelling in love, it is evidently proved to be sincere, and of considerable strength; (see the note on *ver.* 12.) and it having this plain token of God's love to us, we may assuredly hope to appear with humble confidence before him, as true believers, in the awful day of judgment; because as he is all love to us, so we in resemblance of him, and in consideration of his love, are filled with a supreme love to him, and with a sincere and ardent love to the brethren for his sake, even while we live in this tempting and ensnaring world.

18 There is no fear in love; but perfect love casteth out fear: because fear hath torment: he that feareth

18 This love is of such a delightful nature, that, though it be ever attended with a holy filial reverence of God, and cautious fear of offending him; yet, as we thereby *know that we have passed from death to life*, (chap. iii. 14.) there is no distrustful, despairing,

or

feareth is not made perfect in love.

or terrifying fear of God in it, as if he were our enemy: But a sincere love to him, and to fellow Christians for his sake, especially when it is exalted to its highest pitch and fervour, under an assuring sense of his love to us, banishes all diffident, slavish fear of God; because this sort of fear is a most distressing passion, utterly inconsistent with a prevailing sense of his love, and with the sweetness, pleasure, and confidence of a complacential love to him. It is a plain consequence from hence, that he who has a servile dread of God, as an enemy, is far from living under the power of that delightful love, which springs from faith, and considers him as a reconciled God and Father in Christ, and as the most amiable object, infinitely lovely in himself, and all love to us. (*ver.* 16.)

19 We love him, because he first loved us.

19 Our love to him is kindled by, and is the fruit and effect of his own free love to us. He was first in his love to us, which eternally delighted in all his thoughts, schemes, and purposes of glorifying himself in our recovery and salvation by his Son, and which is the original cause and pattern of all our love to him; and the manifestations of his love to us, and our sense of it, and reflections upon it, are the powerful motives of ours again to him; our hearts having before been alienated from him, and never would have been in love with him, had he not first loved us, and given us some discoveries of it to induce our love to him again.

20 If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen, how can he love God whom he hath not seen?

20 This love to God is so inseparably connected with love to his children, that if any one pretends to say, I love God, and at the same time bears an uncharitable, irreconcileable, and malicious temper toward his Christian brother, he acts inconsistently with, and gives the lie to his own profession, and to all that the holy Scriptures say about sincere love to God, which includes a love to all that bear his image and belong to him: For whoever he be that has not a cordial affection to his brother in the faith and fellowship of the gospel, whom he has seen with his bodily eyes, in whom he may also see visible traces of the image of God, and who is an object daily presented to his senses, to raise his esteem of him, and move his compassion and kindness to him, as occasions require; how is it likely, or even possible, that he should heartily love God, who is invisible to mortal eyes, and makes no impression of himself upon the external senses, to affect the heart and engage its love to him, which can never be sincere without a conscientious respect to all his commandments? (See *chap.* v. 3.)

21 And

21 And this commandment have we from him, That he who loveth God, love his brother also.

21 And this is one great and summary commandment, which we have received from him, as ye have heard, (*chap.* iii. 23.) and which he has given us in the moral law, and with further explications and enforcements by Jesus Christ in the gospel, (*Matth.* xxii. 37,—39. and *John* xv. 12, 17.) that he, who sincerely loves God, should also love his Christian brother, who bears his Father's image, and is dear to him; and should make it appear by this, that he doth indeed unfeignedly love God.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a certain test have private Christians, as well as others, in the word of God, to distinguish between those that broach errors concerning the divine person and saving offices of Christ, under pretence of their having the Spirit of God; and those that, under his guidance and influence, preach the truth as it is in Jesus, and cordially own, and bravely profess that he is the only begotten Son of God, and has really appeared in human nature as the Saviour of lost sinners among both *Jews* and *Gentiles!* All pretenders to the Spirit are not of God, nor are to be believed and followed; and they that are born of God, need not be stumbled at them, since there ever have been such in the world; and true believers are enabled to see through them and their delusions, and to withstand and overcome them; because God, who dwells in them by his Spirit, is infinitely greater, wiser, and stronger than the devil, who works and prevails by his antichristian emissaries, upon carnal men. And what wonder is it, that people of a worldly spirit should adhere to them, who are like themselves, and accommodate their schemes and discourses to their corrupt taste? But the servants of God speak from, and for him, according to his mind and will; and therefore are suitably regarded by those, and those only, that are well affected in their hearts toward him.—How astonishing is the free love of God toward such sinful creatures as we are, that he (as his inspired servants testify) has sent his best beloved Son into the world to be the propitiation for our sins, that we might live in all blessedness and glory for ever with him! This is a high demonstration indeed, that God is love; and we must be utter strangers to his amiable excellencies, if we do not love him: Not that we are or can be before hand with him in loving; for we love him, because he first loved us, and because we are brought under its influence and manifestation, to know and believe it. This melts our hearts and gains over our affections to him, and to his children for his sake. And what a sure token is this of our being born of God, and of his dwelling by his Spirit in us, and of our union and communion with him, as those whom he loves! But how vain and preposterous is it, for any to pretend that they have a true and hearty love to that God, whom they never saw, if they have enmity in their souls against those in whom his image is visible, and whom they often see and converse with! This is giving the lie to their own profession, and to the declarations of God in his word, who has commanded that he who loves him, should love his brother also. And when love to God and one another is genuine and abounding, how sweet are its workings! It banishes all slavish tormenting fear of him and of his wrath, which is inconsistent with an affectionate complacential love to him, and to his children as such. But having this evidence of our interest in his love, with what satisfaction may we hope to appear before him with humble boldness in the day of judgment, as those that are accepted of him through his Son.

CHAP. V.

The apostle concludes his argument for brotherly love, by shewing that it is the effect of a new birth, which produces such a love to God, as makes obedience to all his commandments pleasant, and such a faith in Christ, as overcomes this world, 1,—5. *Then, to establish their faith in Christ, he refers to three witnesses in heaven, and three on earth, as concurring to prove that Jesus, the Son of God, is the true Messiah,* 6,—9. *Shews the satisfaction that the believer has in his own soul about him, and eternal life through him, and about God's hearing and answering the prayers, that are offered up according to his will, for ourselves and others,* 10,—17. *And concludes with an account of the happy condition of true believers beyond the rest of the world, and with a charge to renounce all idolatry,* 18,—21.

TEXT.

WHOSOEVER believeth that Jesus is the Christ, is born of God: and every one that loveth him that begat, loveth him also that is begotten of him.

PARAPHRASE.

NOW, to close the argument about brotherly love, which has been so much insisted upon in this epistle, ye ought seriously to consider, that whoever in his very heart believes that Jesus is the true Messiah, and has accordingly an entire dependence upon him, as thea nointed Prophet, Priest, and King of the church, for all salvation, is regenerated by the Spirit of God: And every one who, from this principle of faith, has a supreme love to God, in his esteem of him, desire after him, and delight in him, *who of his own will begat us with the word of truth,* (James i. 18.) cannot but likewise bear a good will to, and take pleasure in his Christian-brother, merely because he is beloved of God, and bears his image, as one that is spiritually begotten of him.

2 By this we know that we love the children of God, when we love God and keep his commandments.

2 It is a plain token, by which we know that we love the children of God, with a genuine Christian love, merely on account of their relation and likeness to him, when it proceeds from such a prevailing love to God himself, as inclines and engages us sincerely to endeavour, by his grace, to live in all holy obedience to his commandments, relating to this and every other duty.

3 For this is the love of God, that we keep his commandments; and his commandments are not grievous.

3 For this is the true and distinguishing characteristic of an unfeigned and governing love to God; and this is the test, proof, and evidence of its being so, and is its proper tendency and effect, that it determines us to *have an* impartial *respect to all his commandments:* (Ps. cxix. 6.) And this sweetly constrains us to pay a conscientious obedience to them, without picking and chusing, or counting any of them (βαρεῖαι) a heavy burden or grievous task; but attending to

to them all, as comprehended in the great law of love, with freedom and delight. (See *Mat.* xi. 29, 30.)

4 For whatsoever is born of God, overcometh the world: and this is the victory that overcometh the world, *even* our faith.

4 For whosoever is born again by the regenerating operation of the Spirit of God, he himself, and (παν το γεγεννημενον) all that new nature which is born or produced in him, gets above the terrors and allurements of the men and things of this world, and even triumphs over them; so as not to be disheartened or driven away by the one, or drawn aside by the other, from his duty toward God: And the noble conquest which we, of this character, obtain over every thing of this world, that would obstruct or interfere with our love and obedience to God, is not by any power of our own, but by the strength we derive from Christ, through faith in him, whereby we trust in him and in God through him, and have realizing and assuring views and hopes of an incomparably higher happiness in the world to come, than it is possible for us to lose in this. (*Heb.* x. 34. and xi. 1.)

5 Who is he that overcometh the world, but he that believeth that Jesus is the Son of God?

5 Who is there of all mankind, whether *Jew* or *Gentile*, that ever hath obtained such a victory over this world, and is so far dead to every thing in it, as not to be cooled in his affections toward God, nor alienated in heart or life from him, by any of its frowns or smiles? Where is the man that has attained to this, but the Christian, who in his very soul believes that Jesus is the true Messiah, and the only begotten Son of God, and depends upon him by a lively and effectual faith as such, for justification, sanctification, and complete salvation?

6 This is he that came by water and blood, *even* Jesus Christ; not by water only, but by water and blood: and it is the Spirit that beareth witness, because the Spirit is truth.

6 This true and only Messiah, even Jesus the anointed Saviour, is he who came into our world with a commission from his heavenly Father to fulfil the work of redemption, which was divinely testified, not only by his coming with water at his baptism; (*Mat.* iii. 16.) but also with water and blood at his death, when the writer of this epistle particularly observed, that both water and blood came forth from his pierced side; intimating, in a symbolical way, the purification which was brought in by him from the defilement and guilt of sin, according to what was typified by legal washings with water, and with the blood of expiatory sacrifices. (See the note on *John* xix. 34, 35.) And his character was afterwards attested by the Holy Spirit, in applying the virtue of his death to the consciences of believers for producing both these effects, as well as in glorifying Christ, by shewing his things to them, and enabling his servants to work innumerable miracles in his name; and we may depend upon the witness which the Holy Spirit, in this practical and effectual manner, bore to Christ,

becauſe he is, by way of eminence, *the Spirit of truth.* (John xiv. 17.)

7 For there are three that bear record in heaven, the Father, the Word, and the Holy Ghoſt: and theſe three are one.

7 For there are three divine perſons, the habitation of whoſe glory is in heaven, that bear their united teſtimony to the incarnate Saviour from thence. The *firſt* is God the Father, who ſaid of Chriſt at his baptiſm and transfiguration, (*Matth.* iii. 17. and xvii. 5.) *This is my beloved Son, in whom I am well pleaſed;* and (*Rom.* i. 4.) *declared him to be the Son of God with power, by the reſurrection from the dead:* The *ſecond* is the eternal uncreated Word himſelf, who ever was God with the Father; (ſee the note on *John* i. 1.) and ſaid, *I and my Father are one;* (John x. 30.) and often aſſerted his office, as well as divine character in the plaineſt terms, and appealed for the truth of it to the miracles which he wrought by his own power, and particularly to his raiſing himſelf from the dead: (*John* ii. 19.) The *third* of theſe heavenly witneſſes is the Holy Spirit, who gave abundant atteſtations to our bleſſed Lord, as the only Saviour, by his viſible deſcent upon him at his baptiſm, (*Luke* iii. 22.) and by his coming from the exalted Meſſiah in heaven to bear witneſs to him, and to ſpread his name, kingdom, and glory in the world *. And theſe three heavenly witneſſes, though

NOTE.

* It would be to little purpoſe to trouble the common *Engliſh* reader with the diſputes that critics, eſpecially of later ages, have raiſed about *the genuineneſs* of this verſe. The learned may conſult *Mill.* in loc. where the Doctor gives the fulleſt and faireſt account, I have any where met with, of the pleas, that are urged from ancient copies, verſions, and quotations, on both ſides of the queſtion; from the whole of which he concludes, that the arguments brought *for the authority of this text* ſeem to him to be ſo ſtrong, that it ought by no means to be dropped. And ſeveral *rational evidences* to ſupport the authenticneſs of it may be ſeen in Mr. *John Reynold*'s continuation of Mr. *Henry*'s expoſition; where he makes moſt of the following obſervations, with which I have intermixed a few others. If we drop this verſe, and join the 8th to the 6th, it looks too like a tautology, and the beauty and propriety of the connection is loſt, as may appear to any that attentively read the 6th and 8th verſes together, leaving out the 7th; and they do not give us near ſo noble an introduction of the witneſſes, as our preſent reading doth; nor make the viſible oppoſition to ſome witneſs or witneſſes elſewhere, as is manifeſtly ſuggeſted in the words, *And there are three that bear witneſs in earth*, ver 8. But all ſtands in a natural and elegant order, if we take in the 7th verſe, which is very agreeable, and almoſt peculiar to the ſtyle and ſentiments of our apoſtle, who, of all others, delights in theſe titles, *the Father* and *the Word*, and who is the only ſacred writer that records our Lord's words, in which he ſpeaks of *the Spirit's teſtifying of him*, and *glorifying him* by *receiving of his things* and *ſhewing them to his diſciples*, and ſays, *I and my Father are one.* (John x. 30. xv. 26 and xvi. 14.) *The Trinitarians* therefore had leſs occaſion to interpolate this verſe, than *the Antitrinitarians* had to take it out of the ſacred canon, if any, on either ſide, can be ſuppoſed to be ſo very wicked as to make ſuch an attempt; and it is much more likely that ſome tranſcriber might, through the ſimilitude of the beginning of the 7th and 8th verſes, or through ſome obſcurity in the writing of that part of his copy, careleſsly ſlip over the 7th, than that any ſhould be ſo daring as deſignedly to add it to the text; and it can ſcarce be thought that

though *personally* distinct in a manner that infinitely transcends all our ideas, are *essentially* one divine being, one thing, (εν εσμι) or one God, in distinction from, and in opposition to all nominal or pretended deities, which *by nature are no gods.* (Gal. iv. 8.)

8 And there are three that bear witness in earth, the Spirit, and the water, and the blood: and these three agree in one.

8 And in concurring testimony with these three divine persons in heaven, who subsist in the unity of the Godhead, and have given their distinct attestations to the saving office of Christ, * there are three *practical* witnesses to the same upon earth. *One* of these lies in the miraculous gifts and saving graces of the Holy Spirit: *Another* is the spotless purity of Christ's human nature and life, (*Heb.* vii. 26.) and his holy doctrine, by means of which the souls of believers are *sanctified*, and *cleansed*, as it were, *with clean water*, (John xvii. 17. 1 Pet. i. 22. and Ezek. xxxvi. 25.) as was signified, not only by *John*'s baptism, which pointed to Christ for this benefit; (*Matth.* iii. 11.) but also by our Lord's own institution of the standing ordinance of Christian-baptism in the name of the sacred Three, which is a solemn and holy dedication of the baptised to the *Son*, together with the *Father* and the *Holy Ghost:* And the *third* of these witnesses is *the blood of the New Testament, which was shed for many for the remission of sins*, as represented in the Lord's supper, (*Matth.* xxvi. 28.) and applied to *purge the consciences* of true believers *from dead works to serve the living God.* (Heb. ix. 14.) And these three, though they be not *one in nature* or essence, nor are to be considered under *personal* agency, as *the Father*, *the Word*, and *the Holy Ghost* are; yet they harmoniously agree, (εις το εν) unto the bearing of one and the same practical testimony among themselves on earth, and

NOTES.

that the apostle, in representing the foundation of the Christian's faith, and the various testimonies that were given to Christ, should omit the supreme testimony; and yet with a reference to the before recited witnesses should add, (*ver.* 9.) *If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater*, though, according to the *Arian* sense of the 8th verse, no immediate witness of God had been mentioned before, if we leave out the 7th verse. (See some of these, and such like thoughts, more at large in Mr. *Reynold*'s. See also Dr. *Hammond* on the place.)

* The whole context shews that the witness here given to Christ relates most *immediately* to his character as the great *Messiah*, or *incarnate Son of God;* and therefore he, as *the Word*, denoting his *divine nature*, under which he is mentioned as a witness to this character, *ver.* 7. is as proper a witness of it as either the *Father* or the *Spirit;* and I take *the Spirit* in this verse to relate, not to his *personal* attestation to this character of Christ, which he gave as one of the *witnesses in heaven*, (ver. 7.) but to his *gifts and graces*, since *that which is born of the Spirit is* called *Spirit.* (John iii. 6.) And these witness to Christ *on earth*, as they appear, and evidently operate in, and by the subjects of them on earth, in confirmation of the doctrine of the gospel concerning him.

and with the adorable *Three* in heaven, as to Christ's being the divine, complete and only Saviour of sinners.

9 If we receive the witness of men, the witness of God is greater: for this is the witness of God, which he hath testified of his Son.

9 Now if, according to what is written in the law of God, we readily admit of, and depend upon the testimony of two or three credible witnesses among men, (*Deut.* xvii. 6. and xix. 15. and *Matth.* xviii. 16.) and they are judged sufficient to determine all controversies about human affairs in any court of judicature; we may be much more sure that the infallible testimony of God the Father, Son, and Spirit in heaven, as well as of those three other witnesses, by divine appointment, on earth, ought to be unquestionably and absolutely depended upon: For this is the testimony of that God who cannot lie, and who in these various ways has given it concerning his only begotten and eternal Son, with regard to his being the true Messiah.

10 He that believeth on the Son of God, hath the witness in himself: he that believeth not God, hath made him a liar, because he believeth not the record that God gave of his Son.

10 Whosoever, upon all this divine evidence, cordially believes and trusts in the incarnate Son of God, as the only true and all-sufficient Saviour, he has, by the light and influence of the Spirit, embraced this witness of God, and has an experimental and satisfying testimony in his own soul of the suitableness, worth, and excellency of Christ; of his ability and willingness to save him; and of his being authorised and every way qualified to deliver him from the guilt and power of his sins, and from all the miseries they had entailed upon him, and to conduct him safe to heavenly glory. On the contrary, whosoever, through unbelief, rejects the testimony of God concerning Christ and salvation alone by him, he flatly contradicts the truth of what God has said about him, and so, in effect, gives the great and holy God the lie; because he does not assent and consent to, and rely upon the plain and positive testimony, (*την μαρτυριαν*) which he has given by his own witnessing, in the ways above-mentioned, to the mediatorial character of his only begotten Son.

11 And this is the record, that God hath given to us eternal life: and this life *is* in his Son.

11 And this is the sum and substance of the divine testimony, *viz.* That God the Father, according to the eternal counsel and good pleasure of his will, has, on Christ's account, given to us who believe in him, (*ver.* 13.) a right and title to, and meetness for, together with the beginnings, earnests, and foretastes of eternal life: And all the felicity of this most excellent life is purchased by, and treasured up and secured in his Son, who, as the head of his body, the church, has all the springs and fulness of it in himself, to communicate to us in the dispensations of grace, which shall issue in all the blessings of eternal glory.

12 Hence

12 He that hath the Son, hath life; *and* he that hath not the Son of God, hath not life.

12 Hence it plainly follows, that he who is vitally united to, and so has a special interest in the Son of God, as his head and redeemer, through faith in him, is already spiritually alive, both in a legal and moral sense, and has the whole of everlasting life in title and sure reversion: But he who, through unbelief, rejects the Son of God, and so, according to the gospel-constitution, excludes himself from any peculiar relation to, and interest in him as a divine Saviour, continues still to be dead in trespasses and sins, and has no pleadable right or claim to the blessings of eternal life. (*John* iii. 36.)

13 These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God; that ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.

13 My design in setting these divine testimonies to Christ in so clear and strong a light before you, who under a sense of your helpless, guilty, lost, and ruined state and condition, as sinners against God, heartily receive and depend upon his eternal Son as your only Saviour, is, that ye may be assured, for your comfort, by the witness of the Spirit with, and in your own souls, according to the word, that ye have all the blessedness and glory, included in the notion of an immortal and heavenly life, in title and reversion; and have not only the earnests of it in yourselves, but have the whole of it in Christ your head, who, as such, has taken possession of it for you; and my further view herein is, that ye may be excited still more and more stedfastly, and with all humble and joyful confidence and perseverance to adhere to, and maintain a firm and entire trust in, the merit and mediation of the only begotten Son of God.

14 And this is the confidence that we have in him, that if we ask any thing according to his will, he heareth us.

14 And we, who really believe in him, are not only assured that he will bring us safe to glory, but we have this further satisfaction and holy boldness (παῤῥησιαν) in our humble addresses to the throne of grace through him, that even while we are in this world of temptation, sin, and sorrow, whatever we present our petitions to God for, with faith in Christ's name, after such a manner as is agreeable to his holy will, according to the notices he has given of it in the declarations, precepts, and promises of his word, he mercifully attends to, and favourably regards the voice of our supplications. (*John* xvi. 23, 24. and *Jam.* i. 5, 6.)

15 And if we know that he hear us, whatsoever we we ask, we know that we have the petitions that we desired of him.

15 And if we are well satisfied that he graciously condescends, for Christ's sake, to hearken to our sincere, believing, humble, and fervent prayers, we may certainly conclude from thence, that whatever we, for matter and manner, thus beg of him, as may be most for his glory and our good, he, in his own time and way, doth, or will grant the requests, which

which we have put up to him in the name of his Son.

16 If any man see his brother sin a sin *which is* not unto death, he shall ask, and he shall give him life for them that sin not unto death. There is a sin unto death: I do not say, that he shall pray for it.

16 Now, to add a direction or two with regard to one's praying for another; if any believer in Christ perceive, that his brother in the profession of the gospel is guilty of any sin, which though in its own nature it be, as all sin is, worthy of death, and by the sentence of God's law has a just entail of everlasting destruction upon it, as its proper *wages*, in opposition to *eternal life*: (Rom. vi. 23.) Yet if it be not the *sin against the Holy Ghost*, which our blessed Lord has declared shall never be forgiven: (See the note on *Matth.* xii. 31, 32.) Or, which amounts to much the same in those who once made a profession of Christ, (see the note on *ver.* 18.) if it be not a wilful and utter apostacy from him, in which case, *nothing remains but a certain looking for of judgment and fiery indignation, which shall devour such adversaries*, (Heb. x. 26, 27.) if, I say, it be not an unpardonable sin, * his Christian brother, as bound in duty and love, shall beg of God to forgive it, in the riches of his grace, through the merit of his Son; and there is ground to hope that, in answer to his prayer of faith, God will grant repentance unto life † to those that have not been guilty of the sin, which irreversibly binds one over to everlasting misery. There is such a sort of unpardonable sin, as will certainly issue in eternal death: And whenever it plainly appears from words and behaviour, that any one has gone into that sin, his case is past remedy; and I cannot encourage praying for the forgiveness of it.

17 All unrighteousness is sin: and there is a sin not unto death.

17 It must be owned indeed that all iniquity, (ἀδικια) as it is contrary to what is right and just toward God, or man, is a deviation (αμαρτια) from the holy law of God, and, as such, in strict justice deserves death. But as, under the *Jewish* dispensation,

NOTES.

* It has been suggested, that *the sin which* is, and *the sin which is not unto death*, relates to such diseases of the body as were inflicted in a way of judgment for sin; for the healing of which they, who had the power of working miracles, were to pray, or not, according as they should perceive, by an impulse of the Spirit, that any Christian brother had, or had not sinned such a sin. But as there does not appear to be any thing in the context that relates to *miraculous* powers, or to the cure of bodily diseases; and this is a direction to Christians *in common*, about praying, one for another, all of which cannot be supposed, even in the apostle's days, to have had *the supernatural* gift of healing, there seems to be no foundation for that thought.

† *He shall give him life*, (δωσει αυτω ζωην) either refers to *God*, who, though not expressed, is *the object* of the prayer spoken of in the foregoing words; or else, taking it for a *Hebraism*, it may signify *life shall be given him*, much in the same manner as in *Matth.* i. 23. *They shall call his name Emmanuel* (καλεσουσι το ονομα αυτου EMMANOTHA) means, *His name shall be called* EMMANUEL.

tion, there were different ſorts and degrees of ſin, ſome of which were puniſhed with death without mercy; (*Heb.* x. 28.) while others admitted of an atonement: (ſee *Lev.* chap. iv, v, and vi.) So, under the goſpel ſtate, there is a ſort of ſinning which is not aggravated, like *that* againſt the Holy Ghoſt, or *that* of utter apoſtacy, ſo as to be out of the reach of pardoning grace, though a ſincere believer may, through temptation and infirmity, like *David*, *Peter*, and others, fall into heinous ſins: And therefore it is lawful and a duty to pray, that he who has been guilty of only ſuch ſort of ſins may be forgiven for Chriſt's ſake, according to God's promiſe in his covenant to his people. (*Heb.* viii. 12.)

18 We know that whoſoever is born of God, ſinneth not; but he that is begotten of God, keepeth himſelf, and that wicked one toucheth him not.

18 We who have received Chriſt, as the only Saviour, are well aſſured, both from the word of God, and from the immortal nature of true grace in the heart, and from the indwelling of the Holy Ghoſt to keep it alive, that whoever is really regenerated by the Spirit of God, is never ſuffered to commit the unpardonable ſin; * nor doth he with full conſent and deliberation perſiſt in the practice of any known iniquity whatſoever; but he who is ſpiritually begotten of God, and ſo born again, has an utter deteſtation of, and abiding contrariety of heart againſt ſuch ways of ſinning; in ſo much, that by watchfulneſs and prayer, and by ſtrength derived from Chriſt, he takes care to keep himſelf from them; and Satan, that wicked ſpirit, has no power to influence him in ſuch a manner, as to carry him into a determined oppoſition to Chriſt, or courſe of ſinning that ſhall end in utter apoſtacy.

19 *And* we know that we are of God, and the whole world lieth in wickedneſs.

19 And we are well ſatisfied that we are ſo born of God, as to be partakers of a divine nature, which is a powerful and abiding principle of all holineſs; and that we are the children of God, in a peculiar relation to him, and ſide with him; and we know that all the reſt of mankind, who are ſtrangers to this new birth, and make up the greateſt part of this world, continue voluntarily under the power of ſin, and of the wicked one, (εν τω πονηρω, *ver.* 18.) and muſt be ranked

NOTE.

* *Whoever is born of God ſinneth not* ſeems here to relate peculiarly to the *unpardonable ſin* againſt the Holy Ghoſt, or to the ſin of *total apoſtacy;* one or other of which, as I take it, was ſpoken of *ver.* 16; and, perhaps, both may be reduced to the *blaſphemy againſt the Holy Ghoſt*, as in one view it was found in thoſe, who, under all the light of the goſpel revelation, never would own Chriſt, but always obſtinately ſet themſelves againſt him; and, in another, was chargeable on thoſe, who had been enlightened, and made a profeſſion of faith in him. And yet, as the apoſtle had before ſpoke of true believers, as thoſe that *cannot ſin* deliberately, and with full conſent and approbation, (*chap.* iii. 6. 9. ſee the note there) that ſenſe is alſo ſuggeſted in the paraphraſe.

ranked under him as their head and prince, *who works in the children of disobedience.* (Eph. ii. 2.)

20 And we know that the Son of God is come, and hath given us an understanding that we may know him that is true: and we are in him that is true, *even* in his Son Jesus Christ. This is the true God, and eternal life.

20 And, from all the undoubted proofs before insisted on, we certainly know that Jesus, the Son of God, has assumed human nature, and actually come into this lower world, to *put away sin by the sacrifice of himself;* (Heb. ix. 26.) and we know by our own happy experience, that he has not only given us an external revelation in his word, but has enlightened the eyes of our minds by an internal operation of his Spirit, that we might have a saving knowledge of him, who is Truth itself: And we are vitally united to him, who, in all that he has said, is the true and faithful witness, (*Rev.* i. 5.) even Jesus Christ the eternal Son of God. * This Jesus, (ουτος) in his original nature, is the only living and true God, together with the Father and Spirit; and our faith in him, who has life in himself, and is the purchaser and giver of spiritual life to us, will certainly issue in eternal life. (*John* v. 26. and xvii. 3.)

21 Little children, keep yourselves from idols. Amen.

21 Upon the whole then, my dear children, whom I as affectionately love, as a father doth his tender babes, let all these considerations engage you to abstain from every appearance of fellowship with pagans in their idolatrous worship of false gods, from all use of images, as representations of the deity, or as mediums of worship, and from every idol of your own hearts; and consider Christ as the true God, (*ver.* 20.) that ye may be secured against idolatry in the worship which ye pay to him. So may it be, to his and his Father's honour, and to your own comfort and salvation! In testimony of my desire and hope of its being so, I heartily say, *Amen.*

RECOLLECTIONS.

How divine, infallibly true, and most certainly, of all others, to be depended upon, are the numerous united testimonies to our Lord Jesus Christ, as the great Messiah, who is the eternal Son of God, the same in nature and perfections with the Father, and has come into our world for the redemption of lost sinners! As the Father, Son, and Spirit (who, though distinct persons, are one divine Being) bore witness to him from heaven; so the graces of the Spirit in the believer's heart, the purifying effects of his death in the washing of regeneration, and the remission of sins through faith in his blood, agree in their testimony on earth to him, as the only and all-sufficient Saviour: And he who, on the credit of this complicated substantial testimony, heartily believes and trusts in the Son of God, for all salvation, has an experimental and satisfying witness in his own soul, which sets to its seal that God is true, and dares venture his eternal all upon it. But he who rejects this testimony, through unbelief, gives the lie to the great God himself, the sum of whose testimony is, that he has given to believers eternal life; and this life is safely

NOTE.

* To clear up and establish the sense of this passage, as asserting that *Christ* is *the true God* here intended, see my sermons on *Jesus Christ God-man*, page 59, 60.

ly treasured up for them in his Son. And O how great is their happiness! They are born of God, and bear his image as his children, and obtain a noble victory over this world by their faith; they have eternal life in and through Jesus Christ; and all their prayers of faith are heard and answered for things agreeable to the will of God. What rich provision and encouragement is here for perseverance, with increasing hope and joy, in the lively exercises of their faith! Though there be still remainders of sin in them, they cannot deliberately and wilfully go into the practice of any iniquity; but are under the government of that love to God, which engages them sincerely to love his children, because they are begotten of him after his own likeness, and to take pleasure in keeping all his commandments. Every transgression of the law, is by its sentence, and in strict justice, worthy of death; but none of them is so great, as not to admit of pardon through faith in the Son of God, except the sin against the Holy Ghost, which includes total apostacy in those who once made a profession of Christ, and is utterly inconsistent with true faith in him; and so shall never be forgiven. But there is room for prayer, and hope of recovery, for any that have not yet committed this sin, which no true believers can ever fall into: For they being born of God, and united to Christ, are under efficacious influence to secure them against the devil's ever being able to draw them into that unpardonable sin. But all the unregenerate part of the world remain under the power of sin and Satan, whom they, as servants, willingly obey; and they must perish in, and for their iniquities; unless, by divine grace, they be turned from them, and brought to believe in Christ for the remission of them. May we therefore, in solemn reflections on all this, absolutely renounce every kind of idol, and worship the Lord our God, and him only; and never entertain a degrading thought of Christ, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is the true God, and the author of eternal life! To whom be glory now and for ever. *Amen.*

A PRACTICAL

EXPOSITION

OF THE

SECOND EPISTLE

OF THE

APOSTLE JOHN,

IN THE FORM OF A

PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE SECOND EPISTLE OF JOHN.

THE matter and ſtyle, the ſpirit of love, and many expreſſions in *this* and the *third* epiſtle (which are thought to have been wrote ſoon after the *firſt*) being not only like, but the very ſame, with thoſe that appear in the *firſt* epiſtle of the apoſtle *John*, *theſe*, as well as that, have been generally, and with good reaſon, received as canonical pieces of his writings. (See the preface to the firſt epiſtle.)

This *ſecond* epiſtle, as many judicious expoſitors think, was wrote to ſome noted perſon of quality and eminent Chriſtian-matron, whoſe proper name was either *Electa*, (ἐκλεκτη) which we render *elect*, or *Cyria*, (Κυρια) which is rendered *lady*, and to her religious children, as the *third* was perſonally to *Gaius*; while others ſuppoſe, that by the *elect lady* is meant, in a *figurative* ſenſe, ſome New Teſtament church, as a collective body, moſt probably at *Jeruſalem*, and by her *children*, the particular members of that church; and that by the *elect ſiſter* (ver. 13.) is meant the church, where the apoſtle reſided when he wrote this epiſtle. But, whatever dubious conjectures may lie on one or the other ſide of the queſtion, it is difficult, and of very little importance, for us to determine upon it, though I rather take it to be meant of ſome *particular perſon* and her children, whether her name were *Cyria* or *Electa*, or not; becauſe the apoſtle, ſpeaking in the ſingular number, ſays, (*ver.* 4, 5.) *I rejoiced greatly that I found of* THY *children walking in the truth. And I beſeech* THEE, *Lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment to* THEE, *which* does not ſeem to be very properly underſtood of *a church*; and ſpeaking of the *elect ſiſter's children* greeting her, (*ver.* 13.) he expreſſes it in the ſingular number, ſaying, *greet thee*. Accordingly the paraphraſe keeps up the air of a *perſonal* addreſs to the elect lady and her children, which as it,

like

like the rest of the holy scriptures, *was written for our learning*, may be considered with an application to any church or body of Christians, and particular persons among them, so far as its subject, matter, and terms agree to them, as the third epistle to *Gaius* may, and as what God said personally to *Joshua* is applied in common to all true believers, *Heb.* xiii. 5. (See the note there.)

In this short letter the apostle salutes the elect lady and her children, 1,—3. *Expresses his joy in, and further excites their faith and love*, 4,—6. *Cautions them to be upon their guard against deceivers, whom he describes*, 7,—9. *Directs their conduct toward them*, 10, 11. *And concludes with excusing the shortness of his writing, by a promise, God willing, to make them a visit, and discourse more largely about things, some of which he had touched upon; and with salutations from the children of her elect sister*, 12, 13.

TEXT.

THE elder unto the elect lady, and her children, whom I love in the truth; and not I only, but also all they that have known the truth;

PARAPHRASE.

JOHN, who by a far advanced age in nature and Christianity, as well as by his apostolic office, and *that* of long standing, is the only surviving apostle, and so emphatically the elder of the church of Christ, sends this letter to the noble matron, who is well known to be, not only a person of high birth and figure in the world; but, which is most of all to her honour, an excellent and eminently choice Christian, (see the note on *Rom.* i. 1.) which carries an evident token of God's having *from the beginning chosen her to salvation, through sanctification of the Spirit, and belief of the truth;* (2 Thess. ii. 13.) and together with her, the writer of this epistle includes her amiable children, who are partakers of the same faith with herself; all of whom, mother and children, I sincerely and affectionately love in Christ, who is *the Truth*, (John xiv. 6.) and for the sake of their having embraced him and the truth of the gospel: And not only I myself, but all those likewise that have heard of them, and especially that have the honour of their acquaintance, and are themselves enlightened with a spiritual and experimental knowledge of Christ and of his true doctrine, (*ver.* 9.) bear a high esteem of them.

2 For the truth's sake which dwelleth in us, and shall be with us for ever:

2 This our affection is of a spiritual nature merely, or chiefly at least, on account of the Lord Jesus who is the truth, and of their harmonious agreement with us in *receiving the word of truth, with which God of his own will has begotten us;* (Jam. i. 18.) and which, being *an incorruptible seed*, abides as a true and living principle of faith and holiness in us, and will remain, as such, in our souls all our days upon earth, and then flourish up into eternal life in heaven.

3 In

3 Grace be with you, mercy, *and* peace from God the Father, and from the Lord Jeſus Chriſt, the Son of the Father, in truth and love.

3 In the fulneſs of my heart, and with humble confidence that my deſire ſhall be anſwered, I earneſtly beg for you, (υμων) mother and children, that all the riches of free love and favour, all tender compaſſion and pardoning mercy, and all manner of peace in your own ſouls, with God and one another, and with the whole houſhold of faith, together with all proſperity of every kind, eſpecially in your ſpiritual concerns, may abound towards, and abide with you all, (μεθ' υμων) from God the Father, who in the economy of ſalvation is to be conſidered, as the original fountain of all bleſſings; and from the anointed Lord and Saviour, who in his *divine nature* is the eternal Son of the eternal Father, with the moſt eminent propriety, and with the higheſt delight, as he is *the brightneſs of the Father's glory, and the expreſs image of his perſon, and is the deareſt Son of his love;* (Heb. i. 3. and Col. i. 13.) and who in his *office-capacity* is the only mediator, purchaſer, and diſpenſer of all the bleſſings that come from the Father through him. All this I earneſtly wiſh and hope in the ſincerity and affection of my heart for you, * that ye may be eſtabliſhed in truth and love, and perſevere in the profeſſion of them according to the goſpel.

4 I rejoiced greatly, that I found of thy children walking in truth, as we have received a commandment from the Father.

4 In teſtimony of the ſincerity of my love and deſire for you, I can aſſure your ladyſhip that my ſoul was warmed with exceeding joy, (οτι) becauſe, upon good evidence, I was well ſatisfied that, of the children which God has graciouſly given you, there are ſome, at leaſt, who have not only received Chriſt and the truth of the goſpel, in the notions of their heads, but have received them with faith and love to influence their hearts and lives; † inſomuch, that whereſoever they go, their converſation is anſwerable thereunto, in obedience to the holy commandment, which we, the apoſtles of Chriſt, have received from God the Father with a commiſſion to declare it.

5 And now I beſeech thee, lady, not as though I wrote a new commandment unto thee, but that which

5 And now, as the *end of the commandment is charity out of a pure heart, and of a good conſcience, and of faith unfeigned,* (1 Tim. i. 5.) one great reaſon of my writing is to entreat you, dear lady, to cultivate a holy diſpoſition conformable to the nature and

deſign

NOTES.

* *In truth and love* may relate either to Chriſt's being *the Son of the Father;* or to the apoſtle's wiſhing that *grace, mercy, and peace might be with them;* or to the end for which he deſired this on their behalf, as repreſented in the paraphraſe.

† It is probable that, on one occaſion or other, ſome of her ſons had travelled abroad, as the word (περιπαλουσι) may ſignify; and that the apoſtle had met with them, and ſeen their excellent ſpirit and deportment to be as became the goſpel of Chriſt; and therefore ſpoke of them as perſons whom he had *found walking in the truth.*

which we had from the beginning, that we love one another.

deſign of the great law of love; (*Matth.* xix. 19.) not that I mean to write and recommend to you any new commandment, as though I would impoſe any thing that you are not already acquainted with and obliged to obey; but what I ſpeak of is only, for ſubſtance, that ſummary comprehenſive commandment of the ſecond table of the moral law, which was enjoined at the beginning of the *Moſaic* diſpenſation, and which our bleſſed Lord repeated and further explained, inculcated, and inforced by evangelical motives, at the beginning of his miniſtry, namely, that from a principle of love to God, we, as his diſciples, ſhould bear a hearty affection one towards another, in imitation of his love to us. (See the note on *John* xiii. 34.)

6 And this is love, that we walk after his commandments. This is the commandment, that, as ye have heard from the beginning, ye ſhould walk in it.

6 And this is the teſt, proof, and evidence of a truly Chriſtian love, and is its genuine tendency and effect, that it engages us to have a conſcientious, chearful, and univerſal reſpect to all God's commandments. (1 *John* v. 3.) But the law of love, as ſpringing from faith in Chriſt, (1 *John* iii. 22, 23.) and influential to all holy obedience, is the commandment, which I have principally in my eye, that, according to what ye have heard of it in the preaching of the word, ever ſince ye were firſt acquainted with Chriſtianity, ye ſhould carefully continue to put it into practice, ſuitable to the deſign of the goſpel.

7 For many deceivers are entered into the world, who confeſs not that Jeſus Chriſt is come in the fleſh. This is a deceiver and an antichriſt.

7 For many falſe teachers are gone abroad in the world, on purpoſe to ſeduce Chriſtians from the way of evangelical faith, love, and obedience, and to ſap the foundation of them all by their pernicious errors, who are ſo far from believing and acknowledging, that they flatly deny our Jeſus to be the only true Meſſiah, who has actually appeared in human nature to fulfil the work of redemption; (ſee the note on 1 *John* iv. 2.) or deny his having had a real body of fleſh, but affirm that he lived and died in appearance only. Whoever eſpouſes and broaches ſuch heretical notions, he is one of thoſe deluders of the people, and direct oppoſers of the perſon, doctrine, and glory of Chriſt, and of the whole of his ſaving office, which he foretold would ariſe; (*Matth.* xxiv. 11.) and of which I have given warning. (1 *John* ii. 18.)

8 Look to yourſelves, that we loſe not thoſe things which we have wrought,

8 Beware therefore of them; look about you; ſtand, mother and children, upon your guard; and take heed that your own faith and practice be not corrupted by them; that ſo neither ye yourſelves, * nor

NOTE.

* The *Alexandrian*, *Stephanus*'s, and other copies of good repute, read *ye*, inſtead of *we loſe*, *we have wrought*, and *we receive*. (Vide *Mill.* in loc.) The paraphraſe therefore is made with an accommodation to both ſenſes, in a juſt conſiſtency one with the other. But I rather prefer the *common reading* as moſt agreeable

wrought, but that we receive a full reward.

nor we, the servants of Christ, may lose the good fruit of our ministry, which was instrumental in gaining you over to Christ, not only in profession, but, as we trust, in sincerity and truth: But, after all the attempts of deceivers to pervert you, *hold that fast which ye have, that no man take your crown,* (Rev. iii. 11.) and that we, together with you, may reap the whole of the blessed reward, answerable to the utmost of our hopes and desires, which God, for Christ's sake, has graciously promised to his faithful servants *that turn many to righteousness,* (Dan. xii. 3.) and to all *them that love him.* (Jam. i. 12.)

9 Whosoever transgresseth, and abideth not in the doctrine of Christ, hath not God: he that abideth in the doctrine of Christ, he hath both the Father and the Son.

9 Let men's pretences be what they will, every one who allowedly transgresses the law of God, and particularly *that* of love; (*ver.* 5. 6.) and does not continue to hold and profess the pure doctrine of Christ, as the true Messiah, (1 *John* ii. 22,—24.) he has not the Spirit of God dwelling in him; nor has he any claim to an interest in God, or in his favour and love. He, on the contrary, who continues to believe and profess, and to practise according to the doctrine of Christ, and concerning him, is a true believer, in spiritual and holy union and communion both with the eternal Father and his eternal Son: (1 *John* i. 3. and ii. 24.) The Spirit of the Father and Son dwells in him; (1 *John* iv. 2.) and he has a sure interest in their favour and love.

10 If there come any unto you, and bring not this doctrine, receive him not into *your* house, neither bid him God speed.

10 If there be any one that comes to you with pretences of preaching the gospel, and doth not bring the forementioned doctrine of Christ in his ministrations, but advances principles subversive of it, give him no hospitable entertainment, more than the common laws of humanity require, as though he were welcome to your house; no, nor so much as admit him into your doors to vent his errors in your family, and endanger the corrupting of them from the simplicity that is in Christ; * nor have any such familiar converſation

N O T E S.

agreeable to a like passage of this apostle in 1 *John* ii. 28.

* To *bid one God speed* (χαιρειν) was a friendly salutation among the ancients; and the forbidding this to be used to such as propagate fundamental errors, contrary to the doctrine of Christ, is generally thought to allude to the *Jews* forbidding to have any familiar correspondence with excommunicated persons, who were to be treated like *Heathen men and Publicans,* as our Lord also directed the proceedings of his church (*Matth.* xviii. 17.) against obstinate offenders, with whom the apostle *Paul* says they were not to eat. (1 *Cor.* v. 9, 11. see the note there.) And the story is well known which *Eusebius* relates from *Irenæus,* in his ecclesiastical history, (lib. 4 cap. 14) where he says, "The apostle *John* "going into the bath at *Ephesus* to wash "himself, and seeing *Cerinthus* there, a "notorious heretic, leaped out of the "bath unwashed, saying, *that he feared lest the bath should fall down, when* "Cerinthus, *the enemy of truth, was in* "*it:* And *Polycarp,* one of *John*'s disciples, meeting at a certain time with "*Marcion,* who said to him, *acknowledge me;* he answered, *I know thee* "*to*

converſation with him, as looks like wiſhing that God would proſper him in his pernicious deſigns.

11 For he that biddeth him God ſpeed, is partaker of his evil deeds.

11 For whoever ſhews him any countenance, and ſpeaks him fair, like one that wiſhes him ſucceſs in the abominable principles and practices, which he would propagate, is acceſſory to, and by juſt conſtruction a partner with him in his wicked works, and contracts the guilt of helping him forward therein, and of encouraging others to fall in with him.

12 Having many things to write unto you, I would not *write* with paper and ink; but I truſt to come unto you, and ſpeak face to face, that our joy may be full.

12 There are many things of this and the like nature, that I could write to you, which I do not think proper to do at preſent, by further ſetting pen and ink to paper; but I live in hope, that, by the will of God, I may, ere long, have an opportunity of making you a viſit, and perſonally converſing with you all, that we may have mutual pleaſure, and an entire ſatisfaction, in freely talking them over by word of mouth.

13 The children of thy elect ſiſter greet thee. Amen.

13 The pious children of your ſiſter after the fleſh, and in a ſpiritual ſenſe your choice, excellent, and I truſt your ſiſter choſen in Chriſt, ſend their moſt dutiful and affectionate reſpects to you. * May there be many ſuch ornaments to the Chriſtian religion among ladies of diſtinction and their offspring! *Amen.*

RECOLLECTIONS.

How rare, but O how lovely is it for perſons of quality and their children tō embrace the pure uncorrupted doctrine of Chriſt with faith and love, and to walk anſwerable to it. All faithful miniſters and friends to the truth of the goſpel greatly rejoice wherever they find it, and moſt ſincerely wiſh them the beſt of bleſſings from God the Father, and from Jeſus Chriſt, his dear and only begotten Son.—Chriſtian religion makes no abatement of civil reſpect to perſons of high rank and near a-kin; but gives a ſpiritual turn to the moſt dutiful and affectionate ſalutations of them.—How important is it for profeſſing believers to ſtand faſt and perſevere in the faith of Chriſt, as the incarnate and atoning Saviour, and in the moſt cordial love to him, and to one another for his ſake, according to the commandment of God, incluſive of a conſcientious reſpect to every other precept! Theſe, and theſe only, have the benefit of a ſpecial relation to, and intereſt in God the Father, and his eternal Son. But, in order to their evident and comfortable continuance herein, how highly doth it concern them, that they be not deceived by falſe teachers, and infected with antichriſtian errors, leſt they themſelves, as well as thoſe that were inſtrumental to their converſion, ſhould be diſappointed of the ample ſatisfaction they hoped for in the happy effects of the goſpel upon them! And how cautious ſhould they be of giving any encouragement or countenance to ſeducers, that would ſubvert the fundamental articles of faith, relating to the perſon and offices, doctrine and glory of Chriſt! They who bid them God ſpeed are acceſſory

NOTES.

"*to be the firſt-born of Satan.*" So greatly were the apoſtles and their diſciples afraid of countenancing and freely converſing with any that had groſsly adulterated the truth, even as *Paul* ſays, *a heretic, after the firſt and ſecond admonition, reject.* (Tit. iii. 10.)

* Probably the ſiſter herſelf was abſent, if not dead, when the apoſtle wrote this epiſtle, and therefore he ſent only the ſalutation of her children, at their requeſt.

acceſſory to all the miſchief that is done by their deſtructive errors.—But theſe things may be better talked over in a free converſation with private Chriſtians, more at large, than can well be wrote in a ſhort letter May all profeſſors of Chriſt be preſerved, by divine grace, from every deluſion! *Amen.*

A PRAC-

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE THIRD EPISTLE OF THE APOSTLE JOHN, IN THE FORM OF A PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE THIRD EPISTLE OF JOHN.

IT is needleſs to add much to what has been ſaid in the prefaces to the two former epiſtles of *John*. *Gaius*, to whom this was wrote, is moſt generally thought to have been that *Gaius*, whom the apoſtle *Paul* called *his hoſt*. (Rom. xvi. 23. ſee the note there.) But as various perſons bore that name, it is hard to determine who this *Gaius* was.

The apoſtle congratulates Gaius *upon his eminent piety and hoſpitality*, 1,—8. *Cautions him againſt ſiding with* Diotrephes, *who was a miniſter of a haughty and turbulent ſpirit*, 9,—11. *But recommends* Demetrius *as a man of an excellent character*, 12. *Excuſes the brevity of this letter by the hope he had of ſoon ſeeing* Gaius, *and concludes with ſalutations*, 13, 14.

TEXT.

THE elder unto the well-beloved Gaius, whom I love in the truth.

PARAPHRASE.

JOHN the apoſtle who, on account of his great age and high office, may with double propriety, and peculiar emphaſis, be ſtyled *the elder*, ſends theſe few lines to the dearly beloved *Gaius*, for whom I, who call myſelf *the elder*, have the moſt ſincere affection, on account of his attachment to the truth of the goſpel.

2 Beloved, I wiſh above all things that thou mayſt proſper

2 So eminent are your light, grace, and holineſs, and ſo evident the fruits of them, my dear Chriſtian friend, that when I conſider the weakneſs and infir-

prosper and be in health, even as thy ſoul proſpereth.

mity of your bodily ſtate of health, * and the many difficulties that obſtruct your being ſo vigorouſly and extenſively uſeful, as your pious and generous temper diſpoſes and qualifies you for, I have nothing ſo much at heart relating to you, as to deſire and beg of God, that all your affairs of life, and animal nature, may hold equal pace with your judicious and thriving ſoul in all its ſpiritual concerns.

3 For I rejoiced greatly when the brethren came and teſtified of the truth that is in thee, even as thou walkeſt in the truth.

3 For I exceedingly rejoiced, when thoſe Chriſtian brethren that came from you, gave an account of the ſincerity of your faith, by means of which the word of truth, the goſpel of ſalvation has taken poſſeſſion of your heart, as evidently appears by your ſteadily perſevering to walk in Chriſt, and in the way of truth and holineſs, through the whole courſe of your life and converſation, in theſe perilous days of perſecution, defection, and error.

4 I have no greater joy than to hear that my children walk in the truth.

4 Nothing can afford me a greater ſatisfaction and delight, than to hear, as I do of you and others, (2 *Epiſt.* ver. 4.) that thoſe converts, whom I think of with as much tenderneſs, care, and affection, † as if they were my own children according to the fleſh, hold faſt the truth of the goſpel in its purity, and live in all holy converſation and godlineſs anſwerable to it.

5 Beloved, thou doſt faithfully whatſoever thou doſt to the brethren, and to ſtrangers.

5 It is an unſpeakable pleaſure to me, my dear *Gaius*, when I hear and reflect upon it, that you act with an integrity becoming your lovely character, and with faithfulneſs to your obligations, talents, and conſcience, as a Chriſtian, in all compaſſionate and generous aſſiſtances to the miniſtring ſervants of Chriſt, and private brethren of your church and acquaintance, that need your liberality; and to religious ſtrangers that are driven from place to place by the violence of perſecutions, or voluntarily go abroad to preach the goſpel, and are well recommended to you.

6 Some

N O T E S.

* It is probable that *Gaius* was of a ſickly conſtitution, and met with loſſes, or entanglements in ſecular affairs, through perſecutions for the ſake of Chriſt, which were a reſtraint upon ſome more eminent degrees of public ſervice, that he might otherwiſe have gone into. This therefore was the beſt wiſh that the apoſtle could make for *Gaius*. But to wiſh that proſperity of ſoul may be the meaſure of proſperity in health and worldly affairs to the greateſt part of mankind, would be to imprecate a curſe, inſtead of deſiring a bleſſing upon them.

† *Gaius* (if it was he whom the apoſtle *Paul* called *his hoſt* while he was at *Corinth*, Rom. xvi. 23.) ſeems to have been converted by that apoſtle who baptized him, (1 *Cor.* i. 14.) and ſpoke of himſelf, as the ſpiritual father that had begotten the *Corinthians* by the goſpel, and eſpouſed them to Chriſt: (1 *Cor* iv. 15. and 2 *Cor.* xi. 2.) And therefore, when our apoſtle ſpeaks of *Gaius* and other believers as *his children*, it may be conſidered as the tender ſtyle of paternal love and affection toward them, whoever were the inſtruments of their converſion; and his uſing this appellation, when writing under the character of *the elder*, has its peculiar beauty.

6 Which have born witneſs of thy charity before the church: whom if thou bring forward on their journey after a godly ſort, thou ſhalt do well.

6 Some of theſe who have been refreſhed by your bounty, have publicly bore an honourable teſtimony to your benevolence and hoſpitality in the preſence of the church, where I now reſide; (ſee the preface to the firſt epiſtle) and as they are about to return to you, and then proceed to ſome other places for further ſpreading the goſpel among the *Gentiles;* if, according to your wonted kindneſs, you will be ſo good as to do what in you lies to give them all needful aſſiſtances for their journey, in a manner ſuitable to your own Chriſtian temper, and to their relation to, and employment for God, you will act (καλως) a worthy part toward them, in imitation of his goodneſs.

7 Becauſe that for his name's ſake they went forth, taking nothing of the Gentiles.

7 For in their love and obedience to our bleſſed Lord, and zeal for his glory, they, though of the *Jewiſh* nation, chearfully went abroad with a commiſſion to preach the goſpel to the *Gentiles;* and, that they might do it without prejudicing the *Gentiles* againſt them, as though they were mercenary in their deſigns, they waved their right of claiming a maintenance from them; (ſee the paraphraſe and notes on 1 *Cor.* ix. 4,—14.) and gave their labours freely, caſting themſelves on the providence of God for a ſubſiſtence, without aſking or receiving any thing towards it from the *Gentile*-converts.

8 We therefore ought to receive ſuch, that we might be fellow-helpers to the truth.

8 It therefore certainly is our duty, who wiſh well to the cauſe of Chriſt and to immortal ſouls, to take ſuch generous, and diſintereſted, and needy miniſters into our affectionate care and kind regards; and to be helpful to them according to our ability, that we may have the pleaſure and the honour of bearing a part with them in the ſucceſs of their miniſtrations, by contributing to their maintenance; and ſo may work together with them in propagating the truth of the goſpel among *Gentiles*, as well as *Jews*.

9 I wrote unto the church: but Dio-

9 I would have wrote a letter * to recommend theſe worthy brethren to the church, of which you, my dear

NOTE.

* Several *critics* have obſerved, that according to the *indefinite* latitude of the *aoriſt* (εγραψα) *I wrote*, may be rendered *I would have wrote*, or *was about to have wrote* to the church, referring, not to any *former* letter, but to what the apoſtle would have wrote, had it not been for the malignant loidly temper and influence of *Diotrephes* among them, probably the church at *Corinth*, of which *Gaius* appears to have been a member, if it is the ſame that is ſpoken of *Rom.* xvi 23. (See the note there.) And then, what the apoſtle adds about *Diotrephes*, gives a very good and obvious reaſon why he wrote to *Gaius* about *receiving the brethren*, rather than to *the church* or to *Diotrephes*, who ſeems to have been a furious judaizing Chriſtian, and an imperious over-bearing and leading man, if not paſtor of the church, that had aſſumed to himſelf ſuch an exorbitant power over it, as would have enabled him, either to ſuppreſs the letter, or to defeat its deſign, by forbidding the church to comply with it, and caſting them out that would, nevertheleſs, ſhew kindneſs to the travelling preachers to the *Gentiles* whom it recommended.

Diotrephes, who loveth to have the pre-eminence among them, receiveth us not.

dear *Gaius*, are a member, to encourage and aſſiſt them in their important ſervice: But *Diotrephes*, as I am well informed, behaves at ſuch an imperious and haughty rate, and is ſo very ambitious of bearing an abſolute ſway, and of carrying every thing among them in an arbitrary manner, juſt according to his own mind and humour, that whatever I ſay, even by apoſtolic authority, ſtands for nothing with him, but is treated with diſdain, as far as it thwarts his pride, prejudices, and ſelfiſh deſigns. I therefore choſe rather to write to you about this affair, than to them, or him, who ſo tyrannically lords it over them, and ſo contemptuouſly rejects both me and the brethren, that are for propagating the pure goſpel of Chriſt among the *Gentiles*. (ver. 5,—8.)

10 Wherefore if I come, I will remember his deeds which he doth, prating againſt us with malicious words: and not content therewith, neither * doth he himſelf receive the brethren, and forbiddeth them that would, and caſteth *them* out of the church.

10 This is ſo inſufferably domineering and inſolent, and ſo injurious to the apoſtolic character, to the truth itſelf, and to the common rights and privileges of the church, that, for this reaſon, whenever I may have an opportunity of making them a viſit, I will ſeverely animadvert upon, and publicly expoſe and reprove him before the whole church for the evil of his doings, who gives himſelf a ſcandalous liberty to talk ſaucily and impertinently, with wicked and malicious reproaches of me and the brethren recommended by me, as though we were beneath notice and regard: And, not being ſatisfied with this, he not only himſelf refuſes to ſhew any kindneſs to the brethren that have expoſed themſelves to wants and hardſhips in preaching the goſpel to the *Gentiles*; but, by his arbitrary way of proceeding, hinders thoſe from countenancing and aſſiſting them that are well inclined to it; and is ſo violent againſt them, that if they either will not, or in conſcience dare not comply with his unreaſonable impoſitions, he, by his own uſurped authority, excommunicates them from any further relation to, or communion with the church.

11 Beloved follow not that which is evil, but that which is good. He that doth good, is of God: but he that doth evil, hath not ſeen God.

11 My dearly beloved *Gaius*, take heed of being intimidated by his haughty and tyrannical management, much more of being influenced to an imitation of his wicked temper and ways, or of any ſinful practice whatever; but copy after * every thing that is excellent in a good man, whereſoever you ſee it. He who is a *doer of good*, (ο αγαθοποιων) and that particularly in a way of benevolence to the ſervants of Chriſt

N O T E.

* *Diotrephes* having been ſpoken of as a *wicked man* juſt before, *ver.* 9, 10. and *Demetrius* being recommended as a *good man* immediately after, *ver.* 12. it is natural to ſuppoſe that the apoſtle had his eye upon both theſe *perſons*, as well as their *ways*, in his exhortation to *follow not that which is evil, but that which is good.*

Chriſt for his ſake, is born of God, bears his likeneſs, lives under the influence of his Spirit, is approved of him, and has communion with him: But whoſoever he be that is *a worker of iniquity* (ο κακοποιων) like *Diotrephes;* and that particularly in haughty inſolence, and in cruel and malicious oppoſition to the faithful ſervants of Chriſt, is a ſtranger to the true knowledge of God and communion with him, who *is love.* (1 John iii. 6, 10. and iv. 3.)

12 Demetrius hath good report of all men, and of the truth itſelf: yea, and we *alſo* bear record and ye know that our record is true.

12 There is one among you, a man of a more excellent ſpirit than *Diotrephes;* ſuch an one I would recommend to your imitation; and that is the noted *Demetrius*, * who is a Chriſtian of a moſt amiable character, particularly for beneficence and charity, among all his acquaintance, whether profeſſors or not; as appears from many inſtances of his goodneſs, and as muſt be acknowledged, to the credit of the goſpel, by every one that would ſpeak the truth concerning him: Yea, and we, the apoſtles and miniſters of Chriſt, cannot but bear an honourable teſtimony to him, from what we have ſeen or heard of him, as an exemplary and public-ſpirited Chriſtian; and thoſe of you who are ſincere members of the church, (οιδατε) well know that our teſtimony, (μαρτυρια) which is never given upon ſlight evidence, may be fully depended upon as faithful and true.

13 I had many things to write, but I will not with ink and pen write unto thee:

13 Many other things were in my mind to write to you, relating to theſe and ſuch like points; but, upon further thoughts, I judge it may be more prudent not to commit them by pen and ink to paper in this epiſtle to you.

14 But I truſt I ſhall ſhortly ſee thee, and we ſhall ſpeak face to face. Peace *be* to thee. Our friends ſalute thee. Greet the friends by name.

14 But I hope, by the will of God, ere long, to make you a viſit; (*ver.* 10.) and then we ſhall have an opportunity for perſonal converſation together by word of mouth, in which we may freely talk over theſe things at large. In the mean while, I heartily wiſh and pray, that all proſperity of every kind, relating to ſoul and body, may attend you. Our Chriſtian friends in my neighbourhood ſend their moſt affectionate reſpects to you. Be pleaſed to make *mine* acceptable to all the orderly members of the church, and cordial lovers of Chriſt and truth, and friends to me and his miniſtring ſervants, in your parts, as though I particularly mentioned them by name.

RECOL-

NOTE.

* What *Demetrius* this was, or whether he were a miniſter, or private member, or officer of the church, is unknown to us; though it was well known, and he was honourably ſpoken of, in thoſe days: And, by the apoſtle's character of him, he appears to have been an exemplary Chriſtian, particularly for hoſpitality; and on that, as well as on other accounts, a pattern of good works worthy of imitation.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How deſirable, but, alas! How few are the inſtances of ſuch proſperity of ſoul in ſpiritual concerns, as one would wiſh to be the meaſure of a proportional ſtate of bodily health and ſucceſs in temporal affairs! Such Chriſtians as abound in faith and charity toward their pious acquaintance and ſtrangers, and give ſubſtantial proofs of it in their lives, are exceeding lovely and greatly beloved, rejoiced in, careſſed, and honourably ſpoken of as worthy of imitation, by all true friends to the goſpel of Chriſt, and eſpecially by his miniſtring ſervants. But how ſhould proud, inſolent impoſers upon churches, and malicious revilers of the uncorrupted goſpel and its faithful preachers, be deteſted, expoſed, and cenſured, as open enemies to it and them, and as injurious and domineering lords over God's heritage, who will neither do good themſelves, nor ſuffer others to do it that would! They are ſtrangers to the true knowledge of God: But all who, from principles of faith and love, ſeek and do the things that pleaſe him, are his children, and ought for his ſake, to aſſiſt miniſtring ſervants in their Lord's work, that they may bear a part with them in propagating evangelical truth and the good of precious ſouls. To write ſuch things as theſe to Chriſtian friends, as occaſions offer, is very uſeful: But how much more delightful and advantageous is it to converſe freely together about them! May all religious affection be ever preſerved among true believers, and mutual ſincere wiſhes of every kind of happineſs, both temporal and ſpiritual, be cultivated between them, with cordial friendſhip one towards another! *Amen.*

A PRAC-

A PRACTICAL
EXPOSITION
OF THE
GENERAL EPISTLE
OF THE
APOSTLE JUDE,
IN THE FORM OF A
PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE EPISTLE OF JUDE.

THE apoſtle *Jude*, the author of this epiſtle, ſtyles himſelf the brother of *James*, (ver. 1.) and was called the ſon of *Alpheus* and *Mary*, and own brother to *James* the leſs, (*Luke* vi. 16. and *Mark* xv. 40.) to diſtinguiſh him from *Judas Iſcariot*, who infamouſly betrayed his Lord; accordingly our apoſtle is called *Judas*, not *Iſcariot*. (John xiv. 22.)

His principal deſign in writing this epiſtle was to caution and fortify the *Jewiſh* converts, perhaps, as Dr. *Lightfoot* thinks, thoſe eſpecially of *Judea*, againſt being drawn into apoſtacy by means of the falſe teachers that had aroſe, and were very buſy among them, to ſubvert the foundation of Chriſtianity. And as the argument of *this* is much the ſame with, eſpecially *the ſecond chapter* of the ſecond epiſtle of *Peter*, it is generally thought to have been wrote about the ſame time, three or four years before the deſtruction of *Jeruſalem*; and great aſſiſtance may be gathered for underſtanding one of them by comparing it with the other.

The apoſtle ſalutes the Chriſtians to whom he wrote, and exhorts them to ſtand faſt in the faith againſt thoſe Jewiſh *zealots that would undermine it*, 1,—4. *Shews the danger of being infected by them, and the dreadful puniſhment which ſhall be inflicted on them and their followers, as exemplified in the unbelieving* Iſraelites, *in the fallen angels, and in* Sodom *and* Gomorrah, 5,—7. *Gives a hideous deſcription of theſe ſeducers and their deplorable end*, 8,—16. *Cautions believers againſt being ſurpriſed at ſuch deceivers ariſing among them, as being forewarned, that they might be forearmed againſt them, and maintain their own ſtedfaſtneſs by faith and prayer, and a prudent care one of another*, 17,—23. *And concludes with a lofty encouraging doxology*, 24, 25.

TEXT.

JUDE the ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, and brother of James, to them that are ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in Jeſus Chriſt, *and* called:

2 Mercy unto you, and peace, and love be multiplied.

PARAPHRASE.

JUDAS, not *Iſcariot*, but a faithful ſervant of Jeſus Chriſt, ſent forth by his immediate commiſſion to preach the goſpel, even that *Judas*, who, by natural birth, was brother to *James* the leſs, ſends greeting to all believers of the circumciſion, who may be conſidered, in the judgment of charity, as thoſe that were ſet apart by God the Father, for himſelf in his eternal purpoſes of love and grace, as his elect * ; and in conſequence thereof, have been ſecured in Jeſus Chriſt, their covenant-head, and preſerved by his all-governing providence from being cut off by death in their unconverted ſtate; and, in due time, were effectually called to the knowledge of him, and to a participation of all the privileges and bleſſings of the goſpel here, and of his glorious kingdom hereafter. (1 *Theſſ.* ii. 12.)

2 May the tendereſt compaſſion of the Father of mercies toward the miſerable and unworthy, and peace with him and one another, and in your own conſciences,

NOTE.

* As *ſanctified*, and *preſerved* are mentioned before *called*, they ſeem to relate, not ſo immediately to *internal holineſs*, and *preſervation in the faith*, which are after *calling*, as to *ſeparation to God*, as the word *ſanctified* ſignifies; (ſee the notes on *John* x. 36. and xvii. 17.) and to a *federal* and *providential* preſervation in Chriſt before, and in order to theſe perſons being called. Or if, with *Beza*, *Pareus*, and Dr. *Whitby*, we admit of a *tranſpoſition* of the ſentence, then the order and conſtruction will ſtand thus, (τοις κλητοις εν Θεω πατρι ηγιασμενοις και Ιησου Χριστω τετηρημενοις) *To the called that have been ſanctified by God the Father, and preſerved in*, or *by Jeſus Chriſt*. And this ſtill points our thoughts the ſame way, as it ſpeaks of their *having been ſanctified*, and *preſerved*, antecedent to their being *called*: And ſo *ſanctified by God the Father* here anſwers to *elect, according to the foreknowledge of God the Father*, and not to *the ſanctification of the Spirit* in 1 *Pet.* i 2. And the *Alexandrian*, *Stephanus*'s, and ſome other copies, and the *Syriac*, *Ethiopic*, and other ancient verſions, (Vid. *Mill.* in loc.) inſtead of *ſanctified* read *beloved* (ηγαπημενοις) by God the Father. But, which ever way we take it, the *ſanctification and preſervation* of the *called* are aſcribed, not to themſelves, but to the gracious acts of God the Father, and of Jeſus Chriſt.

ces, together with the best of all prosperity of every kind; and all the excellent fruits of his special and distinguishing love, with the richest manifestations of it, increase abundantly, in their utmost fulness, towards all and every one of you, unto the begetting of the most fervent love to him and one another.

3 Beloved, when I gave all diligence to write unto you of the common salvation, it was needful for me to write unto you, and exhort you, that ye should earnestly contend for the faith which was once delivered unto the saints.

3 My dearly beloved in the Lord, when I was studiously thoughtful about, and earnestly applied to the work of sending an epistle to you, concerning that spiritual and eternal salvation, which is common to you and me, and all true believers, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, and is proposed, and recommended in the gospel, to the acceptance of all sorts of sinners, to whom it is preached with this assurance, that *whoever comes to Christ, he will in no wise cāst him out.* (John vi. 37.) This is a point of such vast importance, and so vehemently struck at in this day of sad defection, and of intriguing, as well as violent methods to overthrow it, that I thought it necessary, under divine suggestion, to write to you about it, and stir you up by every consideration relating to your own safety and comfort, and to the glory of Christ and of God in him, to exert yourselves, in an humble dependence on divine grace, with the utmost vigour, even, as it were, to an agony of labour, strife, and concern, (επαγωνιζεσθαι) in maintaining, defending, and practising the pure and uncorrupted doctrine of faith in its full extent, with respect to the person, offices, righteousness, grace, and government of the Lord Christ, which was once for all perfected, and was delivered by him to his holy apostles, and by them to the church, consisting of believers that are holy in heart and life; and which was committed as a trust and treasure to them, that they might keep it faithfully, and transmit it to posterity, and not suffer it to be altered, or wrested out of their hands, by any means whatsoever. I say there is great need that I should write to you about this.

4 For there are certain men crept in unawares, who were before of old ordained to this con-

4 For there are certain impious and heretical men, who have clandestinely introduced themselves, by craft and flattery, among you, unawares indeed to you, but not to God; they being men, who were written of in ancient prophecies, * according to the still more

NOTE.

* *Who were before of old ordained to this condemnation* manifestly relates, not to their having been before ordained to their *sin*, but to their being awfully *judged and condemned* for it. In this view it appears to me to be of little moment, whether *before of old ordained* refers to what was anciently written in prophecies, if any such can be found, besides that of *Enoch*, which is not *written* in the Old Testament, nor, as far as I know, *written at all*; or to what was, as it were, written in the eternal counsels of God, in which he determined to punish them, not as creatures simply considered, but as *sinners*: For whatever

condemnation, ungodly men, turning the grace of our God into lasciviouſneſs, and denying the only Lord God, and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt.

ancient records of the divine mind, as a ſet of ungodly men, that ſhall be brought to the awful judgment and righteous puniſhment, due to them for their iniquities; who, under pretences of having embraced Chriſtianity, pervert the doctrine of the grace of God unto the indulging of wanton and laſcivious practices; and who, either to countenance themſelves therein, * or to throw ſlander upon the principles and profeſſion of ſincere believers, put a corrupt and reproachful conſtruction upon this goſpel of free grace, as though it were calculated to encourage diſſolute manners; and, by their wicked courſes, they practically deny the wiſdom, holineſs, and authority of God in his moral precepts delivered under the Old Teſtament, even of that God, who, to the excluſion of all that are not by nature God, is the only living and true God: (ſee the notes on *John* xvii. 3. and 2 *Pet.* ii. 1.) And at the ſame time they reject the true goſpel-doctrine concerning the divine perſon and offices of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, as the prophet, prieſt, and king of the church; whoſe goſpel, as a prophet, is *the doctrine according to godlineſs;* (1 Tim. vi. 3.) *who gave himſelf for us*, as a prieſt, *that he might redeem us from all iniquity, and purify unto himſelf a peculiar people, zealous of good works;* (Tit. ii. 14.) and *the ſceptre of whoſe kingdom*, as a king, *is a ſceptre of righteouſneſs.* (Heb. i. 8.)

5 I will therefore put you in remembrance, tho' ye once knew this, how that the Lord having ſaved the people out of the land of Egypt, afterward deſtroyed them that believed not.

5 To deter you therefore from giving heed to theſe ſeducers, I would remind you, though ye, as converſant with the Old Teſtament, have already known, and been fully aſſured, that the Jehovah of *Iſrael*, having, with an outſtretched arm, delivered his profeſſing people out of their extreme bondage and oppreſſions in the land of *Egypt*, did nevertheleſs afterward cut off multitudes of them in the wilderneſs, by terrible judgments, for their diſobedience and unbelief. (1 *Cor.* x. 5,—10.) And they who, being corrupted by theſe deceivers, fall into like ſins, eſpecially

NOTES.

ver has been *before written* in divine predictions concerning them, it was only a tranſcript of what God had *before determined* to inflict upon them, according to the due deſert of their iniquities, which he foreſaw they, through the perverſeneſs of their own hearts, would voluntarily and maliciouſly involve themſelves in. And I cannot conceive, why there ſhould be any thing more harſh in the idea of God's having *before appointed*, than of his having *foretold* the righteous procedure, whereby he will take vengeance upon them for their heinous provocations; and therefore *both* are ſuggeſted in the paraphraſe.

* *Turned the grace of God into laſciviouſneſs* may be underſtood, either of theſe falſe teachers taking liberty from the doctrines of grace, to indulge their ſenſual inclinations; or of their maliciouſly ſtigmatizing the goſpel-doctrine, concerning it, as though in its own nature and deſign, it led to all impurity. But I am moſt inclined to the laſt of theſe ſenſes; becauſe they profeſſedly oppoſed, inſtead of owning the true doctrine of the grace of God.

especially under the clearer light of the gospel, must expect to be still more severely punished after their example. (1 *Cor.* x. 11.)

6 And the angels which kept not their first estate, but left their own habitation, he hath reserved in everlasting chains under darkness, unto the judgment of the great day.

6 And as ye cannot but know, so ye ought seriously to consider, and reflect upon, the tremendous condition of those once happy and holy angels, (a superior order of beings to man) who did not maintain their integrity in that original state of honour and dignity (ἀρχὴν) in which God created them, but relinquished, and, by the righteous judgment of God, (2 *Pet.* ii. 4.) were cast down from the mansions of bliss and glory, which he had given them to be their own proper abode for ever, in case of their continuing in sinless obedience to him. These, on account of their revolt from God, and rebellion against him, through pride, envy, and affectation of higher power and dominion, than he had assigned to them, he has put into safe custody, like condemned prisoners that are loaded with fetters; and has held them fast by his holy purpose, power, and providence, as with strong and perpetual chains of the horrible darkness of sin and misery, and dismal despair, against the final judgment of the great day, when their torment will be completed, and when all apostates, and impenitent, unbelieving sinners shall *depart* from the blissful presence of Christ, *into everlasting fire, prepared for the devil and his angels.* (Matth. xxv. 41.)

7 Even as Sodom and Gomorrha, and the cities about them in like manner, giving themselves over to fornication, and going after strange flesh, are set forth for an example, suffering the vengeance of eternal fire.

7 Utter destruction shall certainly and suddenly come from the Lord upon all such; even as it did upon the infamously wicked people of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, and of the neighbouring cities of *Admah* and *Zeboim*, (Gen. xix. 24, 25. and Deut. xxix. 23.) in storms of fire and brimstone, rained down from heaven upon them for the flagitious crimes which they greedily committed, by going into all manner of uncleanness, and particularly the unnatural monstrous sin of men with men. The perpetual desolation of that wicked people, and of their cities, the evident marks of which remain to this day, is exhibited in the sacred history, and in providence, to open view, as an example of God's tremendous vengeance, which carries a lively emblem of the everlasting destruction of all the wicked and ungodly in hell-fire.

8 Likewise also these filthy dreamers defile the flesh, despise dominion, and speak evil of dignities.

8 In like manner also, these profligate creatures, who vainly delude themselves and others with their own imaginations, which are no better than foolish and impure dreams, indulge gratifications of fleshly lusts that war against the soul; and defile their own bodies by their lewd practices: Yea more than that, they, like lawless persons, treat all the authority

rity of secular magistrates with insolence, and set at nought all civil government with contempt, especially so far forth as it would restrain their exorbitant vices; and they vilify *the persons*, as well as *the authority* of those rulers that are advanced to the highest of all earthly dignities. (δοξας, see the note on 2 *Pet.* ii. 10.) * They also do the same by *ecclesiastical* officers and their doctrine, and even by the inspired apostles themselves, who ought to be esteemed in their ministerial character, *as the glory of Christ.* (δοξα Χριστ. 2 Cor. viii. 23. See the paraphrase there.)

9 Yet Michael the archangel, when contending with the devil, he disputed about the body of Moses, durst not bring against him a railing accusation, but said, The Lord rebuke thee.

9 All this is directly contrary to the excellent temper and behaviour of such as are most worthy of imitation, even in their treatment of the devil himself; as, to instance in one of the highest dignity, when (according to the traditional and currently believed account) *Michael* † that eminent chief of the holy angels, was engaged in a remarkable contest with the prince of demons, as arguing against him about having the place known, where the body of *Moses* was buried, that he might have a further opportunity of tempting *Israel* to idolatry in worshipping it, for the prevention of which God, in infinite wisdom, concealed his sepulchre from them. (*Deut.* xxxiv. 6.) In this debate the archangel would not venture to do any thing, so contrary to his own holy nature, so offensive to God, and so much above his own match in the diabolical art of railing, as to return the reviling and opprobrious language of that I leave

NOTES.

* These seducers undoubtedly reviled *ecclesiastical*, as well as civil governors; and we are led to a thought of this by the apostle's comparing them (*ver.* 11.) to *those that perished in the gainsaying of* Core against *Moses* and *Aaron*.

† Some by *Michael* understand *Christ* himself, and others, the most *eminent* of all the holy angels. And Dr. *Lightfoot* tells us, (Vol. I. p. 338.) that "among the Talmudicks there seems to be something like the relicts of the story here referred to, *viz.* of *Michael*, and the *angel of death* disputing or discoursing about fetching away the soul of *Moses*." But this is a different thing from disputing about the *body* of *Moses*. However Dr. *Whitby* says in his note on this verse, "that there was an altercation betwixt *Michael* the archangel, and *Samael* the prince of the *devils*, about the body of *Moses*, we learn from the traditions of the *Jews*." On this supposition, the apostle's arguing from some known and allowed tradition among them had, its weight in his dealing with them: And, possibly, he might know by divine revelation, that this was a *real fact*, and not an idle story, like many others of their traditions. The same may be observed with respect to what he says, *ver.* 14. about *Enoch*'s prophecy. (See the note on 2 *Tim.* iii. 8.) Upon the whole, though I am far from being certain; yet, for want of a better, I incline to this *literal* interpretation, as more natural and less forced, than any other that has been offered on this difficult passage; among which the most probable of them seems to be that, which takes the *body of Moses*, in a *figurative* sense, to signify the *body* or *system of* Moses's *law*. But still we are at as much uncertainty about there ever having been any such dispute between *Michael* and the devil about *the law*, as about the *body* of *Moses*.

foul ſpirit; but only ſaid, in a way of ſolemn rebuke, I leave you to the righteous judgment of God, to deal with you according to your wicked deſign of drawing his people into the moſt flagrant ſin againſt his divine majeſty, crown, and dignity.

10 But theſe ſpeak evil of thoſe things which they know not: but what they know naturally, as brute beaſts; in thoſe things they corrupt themſelves.

10 But theſe daring pretenders do not ſtick at vilifying and reproaching things, both civil and ſacred, (ſee the note on *ver.* 8.) which are in their own nature ſo far from being evil, like the devil and his deſigns, that they are of eminent worth and importance; but the uſe, deſign, and benefit of which they are utter ſtrangers to: And (δὲ) even in thoſe things, which they naturally know, like animals void of reaſon, and, by the light of nature, cannot but know to be unlawful, they, like irrational beaſts, behave as though they had no principle of reaſon to guide or govern them; but act at ſuch a monſtrouſly perverſe, ſenſual, and brutal rate, as to defile and debaſe themſelves, beneath human nature, to the laſt degree.

11 Wo unto them; for they have gone in the way of Cain, and ran greedily after the error of Balaam for reward, and periſhed in the gainſaying of Core.

11 The moſt dreadful of all woes will ſurely fall upon their heads; for in hating and envying thoſe, whom they ought to have treated with reſpect, they are influenced by the ſame malignant ſpirit that governed *Cain*, when he murdered his brother *Abel*, only *becauſe his own works were evil, and his brother's righteous:* (1 John iii. 12, 15.) And, with a profuſion of covetous, ambitious, and wicked deſires and endeavours, (ἐξεχυθησαν) they have vigorouſly exerted themſelves to corrupt the goſpel, (*ver.* 4.) and draw the profeſſors of it into ſin and perdition; and ſo have imitated the treacherous iniquity of *Balaam*, that mad prophet, who, had God permitted him, would have curſed *Iſrael*, and enſnared them to their ruin, for the ſake of the reward which *Balak* the king of *Moab* offered him. (*Numb.* xxii. 21, &c. ſee the note on 2 *Pet.* ii. 16.) And they ſet themſelves againſt civil government, and the inſpired apoſtles and ſervants of the Lord, to reſiſt and reproach them, (ſee the note on *ver.* 8.) as *Corah*, *Da'than* and *Abiram*, with their accomplices, did in their pride and ſedition againſt *Moſes* the ruler, and *Aaron* the high prieſt, for which the earth opened and ſwallowed them up alive, to the deſtroying of them all. (*Numb.* xvi. 1,—33.) Awful emblems of the worſe deſtruction, which ſhall come upon theſe envious and ungodly men!

12 Theſe are ſpots in your feaſts of charity, when they feaſt with you,

12 Theſe, like odious and filthy blemiſhes and ſmears upon the face, or upon a garment, are the deformity, ſcandal, and defilement of your feaſts of entertainment, whether they be held in a way of ci-

vil

you, feeding themſelves without fear: clouds *they are* without water, carried about of winds; trees whoſe fruit withereth, without fruit, twice dead, plucked up by the roots;

vil or religious ſociety and friendſhip, * while they banquet with you, to gratify their luxurious appetites, without fear of the guilt they contract, or of the terrible wrath that awaits them for it. They put on falſe appearances; and are as uſeleſs and unſtable as empty clouds that yield no water, to refreſh the earth; and they are driven about by their own luſts and paſſions, as thoſe light clouds are by tempeſtuous winds, from one error and evil way to another: And as little benefit is to be expected from them, as from trees whoſe fruit is blighted, withers, rots, and comes to nothing before it is ripe, like the immature fruit that drops off in autumn; (φθινοπωρινα) yea, as from trees that are perfectly, and as it were twice dead, to allude to theſe men, who, in their natural ſtate, were dead in ſin, and now by their apoſtacy are confirmedly ſo, paſt recovery; and they are like trees ſtubbed up by the roots, never to revive, or bring forth good fruit for ever, and only fit to be caſt into the fire.

13 Raging waves of the ſea, foaming out their own ſhame; wandering ſtars, to whom is reſerved the blackneſs of darkneſs for ever.

13 Nay, they are not only altogether and incurably uſeleſs, but horribly turbulent and pernicious. Their furious reproaches are belched out againſt the doctrines and diſciples of Chriſt with noiſe and clamour, and threatnings of deſtruction, like the formidable billows of the ſea in a violent ſtorm, when it rages and foams, and caſts up its own mire and dirt, (*Iſa.* lvii. 20.) as theſe malignants do their own filthineſs, while they pour out their corrupt principles, vicious inclinations, and malicious ſlanders, which turn to their own ſhame. Under all their pretences to be lights and ſtars for the guidance of others, they wander from the truth and holineſs of the goſpel to miſlead their followers; and are like the *planets*, which in themſelves are dark bodies, and continually ſhifting their places; or like ſhining meteors which are called ſhooting or falling ſtars. They make a ſudden blaze, and ſoon expire in darkneſs, are fleeting in all their ways, and run about from place to place to ſpread their wicked principles, temper, and courſes. So highly aggravated are their crimes, that, inſtead of their boaſted light and their ſenſual pleaſures, the horrors of the thickeſt darkneſs, miſery, and black deſpair are laid up in ſtore for them, by the righteous judgment of God, to be their diſmal portion, without the leaſt dawn of comfort or hope, to all eternity.

14 And

NOTE.

* It does not appear to me what *feaſts* theſe were, whether entertainments in token of civil friendſhip, or of religious affection, which were uſed among *Jews* or *Chriſtians*; and therefore the paraphraſe leaves it undetermined.

14 And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied of these, saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousands of his saints,

14 And even *Enoch*, the seventh person recorded in the line of descendents from *Adam*, (Gen. v. 3,—18.) foretold, in a generally received traditional prophecy, (see the note on *ver.* 9.) such things so long ago, as are truly applicable to the sin and condemnation of these very men, saying, Observe with attention and reverend awe, the Lord Christ, the promised Messiah, is coming, and in due time will certainly appear in all his majesty and glory, with a retinue of myriads, even an innumerable company of his holy ones, (αγιαις αυτε) angels and saints, to their everlasting joy. (*Matth.* xxv. 31. and 1 *Thess.* iii. 13.)

15 To execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard *speeches*, which ungodly sinners have spoken against him.

15 He will then sit on the throne of his glory to arraign all mankind before him, and pass a decisive sentence upon them severally, according to their respective characters; and particularly to reprove, convict, condemn, and punish all that shall then be found to be wicked and ungodly among them. He will severely reckon with them for all their impious works, which they have wrought with premeditated malice, and for all the virulent speeches which these licentious sinners have thrown out upon his person, gospel, and cause, and upon his members and faithful servants for his sake, which he will resent in the day of judgment, as done against himself. (*Matth.* xxv. 45.)

16 These are murmurers, complainers, walking after their own lusts; and their mouth speaketh great swelling *words*, having mens persons in admiration, because of advantage.

16 The false teachers we are speaking of, will meet with the heaviest doom in that awful day: For they are secret murmurers against God and his providence, against magistrates and ministers, and against Christ and his followers and ways; and are continually finding fault and openly quarrelling with all his doctrines and dispensations, as being prejudiced against them, and dissatisfied with their own state and condition in the world: They, in the restless temper of their minds, pursue their own vicious inclinations to unlawful pleasures; and at the same time they talk in lofty, unintelligible, senseless strains, with high pretences to knowledge and religion; and, in the pride of their hearts, speak the most excessively vain and conceited things of themselves, that have nothing in them; and they extravagantly flatter, caress, and extol persons of their own party, especially the rich among them, be they ever so vile; because they expect to reap some worldly advantage from them, to gratify their covetous and luxurious temper.

17 But, beloved, remember ye the words which were spoken

17 But, my dearly beloved brethren in the Lord, let none of these things move you from your own stedfastness; nor be ye stumbled at them, *as though some strange thing had happened to you.* (1 Pet. iv. 12.)

spoken before of the apostles of our Lord Jesus Christ:

12.) To silence all such discouraging thoughts, call to mind and reflect upon the warnings about them, that have been given you beforehand, as by our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ himself; (*Matth.* xxiv. 11.) so by his inspired apostles; (2 *Tim.* iii. 1. and 2 *Pet.* iii. 2, 3.) which being now fulfilled, are a confirmation of, rather than an objection against, the doctrines delivered by them.

18 *How* that they told you there should be mockers in the last time, who should walk after their own ungodly lusts.

18 Remember how plainly they have told you, that in this concluding period of the *Jewish* church and state, and commencement of the last dispensation of grace, which is to continue to the end of the world, there certainly would arise profane scornful deriders of every thing that is sacred, and particularly of Christ's coming to judgment; (2 *Pet.* iii. 3, 4.) a set of abandoned men, who treat these solemn things with contempt and ridicule, that they may be the more easy in indulgences of their corrupt inclinations, according to the full bent of their own wicked hearts, that have cast off the fear of God.

19 These be they who separate themselves, sensual, having not the Spirit.

19 These are the very men, of whom our blessed Lord and his apostles warned you; men that make factions and divisions in the church, alienating themselves from the true apostles, servants, disciples, and doctrines of Christ, and forming separate parties of their own sortment, as though they were more holy than others; whereas, in reality, they are mere sensualists, governed by animal appetites, lusts, and passions; and are entirely destitute of the enlightening, purifying, and sanctifying gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit.

20 But ye, beloved, building up yourselves on your most holy faith, praying in the Holy Ghost,

20 But as to you, my dear Christian friends, take heed of being misled by men of such corrupt principles and practices. But go on by divine assistance, with integrity and faithfulness in your holy profession; and in order hereunto, persist in seeking, by all proper and appointed means, your own and your fellow-Christians (see the note on *Eph.* iv. 32.) spiritual establishment and advances in grace, holiness, and comfort, upon the foundation of faith, which is laid in the *doctrine* of *the apostles and prophets, Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner stone;* (Eph. ii. 20.) and upon that *principle* of faith in you, which *purifies the heart, works by love,* and *overcomes this world;* (Acts xv. 9. Gal. vi. 6. and 1 John v. 4.) and which derives all grace out of Christ's fulness to enable you to *grow up in all things into him, who is the head:* (Eph. iv. 15.) And, together with a lively exercise of this most holy faith, be instant in prayer, under the guidance and influence of the Holy Spirit *to help your infirmities.* (Rom. viii. 26.)

21 In

21 Keep yourselves in the love of God, looking for the mercy of our Lord Jesus Christ unto eternal life.

21 In this most excellent way of proceeding, let it be your constant study and endeavour to approve yourselves to God, as those that sincerely and fervently love him, and delight to keep his commandments; (1 *John* v. 3.) and be careful to cultivate this love in one another, as also to maintain a sweet and experimental sense of God's special love to yourselves, to influence you thereunto, as those that are looking, hoping, and longing, in a prepared state and frame, for the final manifestations, fruits, and effects of the gracious and merciful sentence of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, unto your complete deliverance from all sin and sorrow, and admission to all the blessings of eternal life, even *for the grace that is to be brought unto you at the revelation of Jesus Christ.* (1 Pet. i. 13.)

22 And of some have compassion, making a difference.

22 And as to such among you, that may be seduced into any error or sin, great prudence is to be used in a different manner of dealing with them, according to their different circumstances. Some that have been staggered, and in measure drawn aside, through their own inadvertence, ignorance, and weakness, and the subtilty of deceivers, ye should treat with all tenderness, meekness, condescension, and endearing kindness, and with a friendly and compassionate concern to recover and establish them.

23 And others save with fear, pulling *them* out of the fire; hating even the garment spotted by the flesh.

23 And others that have gone further lengths, and seem to be obstinate and hardened, like those who seduced them, ye ought to deal more sharply with, by faithfully setting before them their guilt and danger, the awful threatnings of God's word, and the dreadful wrath and ruin they expose themselves to, and by passing a church-censure upon them, if needful, that ye may awaken their just fears of persisting in the evil of their ways: This is the likeliest method, by the blessing of God, to reclaim them and prevent their eternal destruction; and to pluck them, with a sort of holy violence, as brands out of the fire, that were very near being consumed by it. In all which ye should be influenced by an utter detestation of every thing that has any defilement in it; and should act with a holy resolution to avoid, and *have no fellowship with unfruitful works of darkness;* (Eph. v. 11.) in like manner as the *Jews*, according to the law of *Moses*, were not to touch any unclean thing; a garment, that had the plague of leprosy in it, was to be burnt. (*Lev.* v. 2, &c. and xiii. 52.)

24 Now unto him that is able to keep you from falling,

24 Now, to conclude with a solemn doxology, which belongs, as to all the persons in the adorable Godhead, so particularly to our Lord Jesus

falling, and to present *you* faultless before the presence of his glory with exceeding joy.

Christ,* whom we have been speaking of under such characters, as are peculiarly suited to your encouragement and relief under all your present troubles; (*ver.* 14, 15, 21.) I would express it in the following lofty and endearing strain, To him who has almighty power originally in himself, as God, and all office-authority and qualifications, as Mediator; and, having graciously undertaken, is as willing as able, to preserve you from apostacy, and from irrecoverably stumbling and falling into, and by the errors of the wicked; and, after your state of warfare is accomplished, to *present you to himself*, and to his Father, at his second coming, *a glorious church, not having spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing; but that it should be holy, and without blemish;* (Eph. v. 27.) and should stand with complete acceptance in his immediate presence, when he shall appear in all his glory, and ye shall appear with him in glory, (*Col.* iii. 4.) and with triumphant and ecstatic joy, and all the holy angels and glorified saints, together with the sacred Three, shall exceedingly rejoice with you.

25 To the only wise God our Saviour, *be* glory and majesty, dominion and power, both now and ever. Amen.

25 To this God our Saviour, who, together with the Father and Spirit, is infinitely, originally, essentially and communicatively the only wise God: To him, as well as to those other adorable persons, be ascribed, as is equally due, all the glory of his divine nature and attributes, as God, and of all his love and grace, designs, undertakings, and performances, as likewise all the grandeur of his heavenly Majesty, as God-man mediator, together with universal rule and government, might and authority, over all persons and things, in the kingdom of providence and of grace, now, henceforth, and for evermore. In this ascription of glory, may we and all the saints and angels join, as with one heart and voice! *Amen*, so let it be, and so it shall be.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What an honour do the best of men think it, to be the faithful servants of Jesus Christ! Such are heartily desirous that all the blessings of divine love, mercy, and peace

NOTE.

* It seems to me, that the divine person, here most immediately intended, is *our Lord Jesus Christ* who is principally spoken of all along in the preceding context, and is often styled, by way of eminence, *The Saviour*, and *God our Saviour*, as in *Eph.* v. 23 *Phil* iii. 20 *Tit.* ii. 13. and 2 *Pet.* i. 1.; and is here called *the only wise God*. (ver. 25.) not to the exclusion of the Father and Spirit, but only of all idols. (See the note on *John* xvii. 3.) And as his *presenting us faultless before the presence of his glory* manifestly relates to the time of his glorious appearing to judgment, for executing a dreadful sentence on the ungodly, and shewing mercy to believers unto eternal life; (*ver.* 14, 15, 21.) so this exactly agrees with the work that is peculiarly ascribed to him, as *the Saviour of the body*, and head of the church (*Eph.* v. 23,—27.) But I do not find that the *presentation* of the church at the last day is ever ascribed to God the Father. (See my volume of sermons on *Jesus Christ God-man*, page 64, 65.)

peace may be multiplied to the choſen and called of God; and they lay themſelves out, with diligence, to promote the common ſalvation of all that believe in Jeſus, and to excite their fervent zeal for preſerving the doctrines of Chriſt, juſt as they were once delivered to the ſaints under the inſpiration of his Spirit. How careful ſhould all Chriſtians be to guard againſt turning the doctrine of the grace of God into licentiouſneſs; and againſt ſuch deceivers, as would ſlily inſinuate themſelves into their affections, and overthrow the purity of the goſpel, eſpecially in its fundamental articles, relating to God and our Lord Jeſus Chriſt! The corrupters of this ſort are wicked men, whom the ſovereign and holy God has of old determined to puniſh for their impieties, with everlaſting deſtruction in all the horrors of the thickeſt darkneſs, miſery, and deſpair. Thus he has dealt with the fallen angels, and the flagitious ſinners of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*; and thus he will deal with the perſecutors of his people, who, like *Cain*, hate and would murder them, for righteouſneſs ſake; and, like *Balaam*, would curſe and ruin them, for their own ſecular intereſt; and like *Corah* and his company, ſet themſelves in oppoſition to the ſervants of the Lord, and even to civil magiſtrates and all wholeſome laws, through their own ignorance of their excellency, and through brutal propenſions to what they cannot but know, by the light of nature, to be very ſordid and defiling. Theſe, under all their vain boaſts, are an unſtable, deluded, and deluding ſort of men, haughty deriders of all that is ſacred and worthy, deſtitute of the Spirit of God; and perfect ſenſualiſts, that aim at nothing but worldly gratifications. But, ah! what a reproach are perſons of theſe odious characters to Chriſtian or civil ſociety, in their ſeatting, with love and choice, together! They are not only uſeleſs and unprofitable, but injurious and dangerous: And when Chriſt ſhall appear in his glory, with an innumerable company of attending ſaints and angels, he will juſtly condemn and puniſh them for all their impious and malicious calumnies upon him and his people, doctrines and ways. But believers need not be ſtaggered at, or by them, ſince our Lord himſelf and his apoſtles have given fair warning of them before-hand; nor need they return railing for railing, in vindication of the truth and of themſelves, but only refer them to that God, who judges righteouſly. But O what a happineſs is it, amidſt all theſe trials, to go forward in faith and prayer under the influence of the Holy Spirit, and to maintain our love to God and one another, and a ſenſe of his love to us in an humble, patient, and joyful expectation of the mercy of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt to eternal life! How greatly are thoſe profeſſors to be pitied, that are in danger of falling into the ſnare of deceivers! With what gentleneſs are the weak among them to be treated and allured! And with what holy violence, as by the terrors of the Lord, are the more obſtinate and daring to be ſnatched, like brands out of the fire! May all glory be aſcribed to the only wiſe God, incluſive of Jeſus Chriſt our Saviour, who is able in himſelf, and authoriſed in his office, to preſerve us from all apoſtacy, and to preſent us without ſpot or blemiſh, and with unſpeakable joy, before the preſence of his own and his Father's glory, at his ſecond appearing without ſin unto ſalvation! May we be found among this happy number at the great day of account! *Amen.*

A PRAC-

A PRACTICAL EXPOSITION OF THE REVELATION OF ST. JOHN THE DIVINE, IN THE FORM OF A PARAPHRASE.

THE PREFACE TO THE REVELATION.

THE writer of this ſacred book appears with good evidence to have been the apoſtle *John*, (Vid. *Mill.* Prolegom. pag. 19,—21. and ſee *Twells*'s examination of the late new text and verſion of the New Teſtament) who is called *the Divine*, perhaps, becauſe he had the ſpecial honour of God's giving him the extraordinary prophetic revelation contained in this book; or becauſe he was an eminent advocate for the divinity of Chriſt, as appears in his goſpel and epiſtles.

This important revelation, which is moſt commonly thought to have been written about the year of our Lord 96 or 97, may be caſt into two principal parts. One, which lies in the three firſt chapters, and is delivered in an epiſtolary form to the ſeven famous churches in the proconſular *Aſia*, relates to the then preſent ſtate of thoſe churches, and the things that would ſoon be fulfilled in them.—The epiſtles thus directed to them were indeed deſigned, like other parts of ſcripture, for our inſtruction, in ſuch cautions and encouragements, promiſes and threatnings, as are applicable to other perſons and churches, in like circumſtances, through all ſucceeding generations. But I could never ſee ſufficient ground to think that they, as ſome ſuppoſe, were like the reſt of this book, prophetic of a ſucceſſive ſtate of churches from the apoſtles days to the end of the world, which ſhould correſpond, in order of time, to that of theſe ſeven churches, all of which were written to, as conſidered in their then preſent and contemporary circumſtances, and not in what they would be one after another, according to the order in which the epiſtles were directed to them: Nor do I apprehend the characters of each of thoſe churches to be diſtinct enough to mark out thoſe imaginable

maginable periods, which, by the help of a fruitful invention and forced conſtructions, have been aſſigned to them by different learned writers with very different application: But ſome of them are as applicable to ſeveral ages, as to any one age of the church; and perhaps, there is hardly any particular age, except the laſt that is yet to come, in which there are not ſome churches or profeſſing Chriſtians, to which many of the things may be applied that are found in *all* theſe epiſtles; and this book of prophecy ſpeaks of a glorious ſtate of the church that ſhall be on earth in the laſt days, which none of theſe epiſtles, and leaſt of all the laſt of them, can be ſuppoſed to exhibit to us.

The other principal, and by far greateſt, part of the prophetic revelation is introduced *chap.* iv. and, as I conceive, is carried on from thence to the end of the book, ſetting forth a regular ſeries of events, which ſhould come to paſs in ſucceſſive periods, relating to the *Roman* empire, and the church of Chriſt, as chiefly concerned with it, through all ages, from the time of the apoſtle's writing, to the conſummation of all things, which ſhall iſſue in the utter deſtruction of hypocritical and formal profeſſors, and all Chriſt's enemies, and in glorious days on earth, and the everlaſting joy and triumph of the ſaints in heaven.

The meaning of theſe wonderful prophecies has been ſearched into, with great care and diligence, by many learned and pious men of former and later ages: But their interpretations, in various inſtances, are ſo very different and contradictory, and ſeveral of them ſo evidently proved by after facts to be entire miſtakes, that I dare not preſume to be very poſitive in determining upon all the events, that anſwer even ſuch predictions, as may juſtly be ſuppoſed to have been already fulfilled; much leſs in fixing the exact time for the accompliſhment of thoſe that are ſtill to be fulfilled in their reſpective ſeaſons; concerning which we muſt needs be under ſome ſuſpence, unleſs we could certainly know the point of time, from whence we are to begin the computation of ſuch prophetic days or years, as are laid out for their period.

It may be ſaid of the prophecies of this book, as it was to *Daniel*, when *he heard, but underſtood not*, and cried out, *O my Lord, what ſhall be the end of theſe things?* In anſwer to which he ſaid, *Go thy way*, Daniel, *for the words are cloſed up and ſealed till the time of the end*, (Dan. xii. 8, 9.) intimating that they are not to be thoroughly underſtood till they be all completely accompliſhed; and even the predictions of our bleſſed Lord about his death, reſurrection, and exaltation, were not clearly underſtood by his diſciples, till they were fulfilled; but *then they remembered that he had ſaid theſe things to them, and that theſe things were written of him.* (John ii. 22. and xii. 13,—16.) Nor did the apoſtle *Peter* underſtand the full meaning of what Chriſt foretold about the baptiſm of the Holy Ghoſt as to be extended to the *Gentiles*, till the *Holy Ghoſt fell on* Cornelius and his company, as it had before on *Jewiſh* believers; but then *he remembered the word of the Lord, how that he ſaid*, John *indeed baptized with water, but ye ſhall be baptized with the Holy Ghoſt.* (Acts xi. 15, 16.)

It

It seems to me, that one great design of prophecies is to leave our thoughts under some obscurity about their precise meaning and time of accomplishment, till events explain them; lest a certain knowledge beforehand of the things pointed to, and of the times in which they were to take place, should give umbrage to some reigning powers on earth; and should disconcert the ordinary course of human affairs, and put some men upon measures, which they otherwise would never have thought of, to fulfil the predictions; and thereupon the accomplishment of the prophecies, in their season, should be ascribed to the craft and management of men, rather than to the wisdom and power of God. But his bringing them about, one after another, in their proper time and order, without any design in the instruments of them to fulfil divine predictions, (as was the case of *Joseph*'s brethren, in selling him into *Egypt*; and of the *Jews* and *Romans* in concurring to crucify our blessed Lord) reserves the entire glory of the whole to his own over-ruling conduct; and is an undeniable testimony to his infinite unerring foreknowledge of the free actions of men, and to his all-governing providence in whatsoever comes to pass: and as fast as any of the prophecies of this book are manifestly fulfilled, they are a further confirmation of the truth of Christianity, and of the faith and hope of the church, with respect to all that remains to be still performed; and are a rich encouragement to their patience under all their troubles, which in every period are foretold as to issue in bright scenes of prosperity and glory. And when the whole scheme shall be finished, every part will appear in its proper place and order, and a divine beauty will be seen to spread conspicuously through it all.

We may therefore, with some probability at least, humbly attempt to settle the interpretation of the prophecies by *historical* facts, as far as they have been hitherto fulfilled, which reach to the time of the *fifth vial*, according to some expositors; or of the *sixth*, according to others: And yet it is hard always to adjust even *these* with certainty, because there are some other events of Providence, that may seem to be as fairly applicable to those parts of the prophecies. But, I think, the late learned Mr. *Lowman* has, upon the whole, matched *facts* with *accomplished* predictions, better than any other writer that has fallen under my notice. And as nothing ever puzzled my thoughts on this book more, than the *synchronisms*, or contemporary events, which commentators have almost universally supposed to be represented in the seven epistles to the churches of *Asia*, and in the *seal* and *book*-prophecies, as some distinguish them, or, as others call them, the *open* and the *sealed* book; so this gentleman, in his elaborate and judicious paraphrase and notes, and in his preface to the whole, seems to me to have settled the periods of the *seals*, *trumpets*, and *vials*, with a good degree of probability, in a regularly connected, and progressive order of time, from the beginning to the end: And therefore I have mostly followed him in *historical facts*; and have in a manner done so entirely, with respect to the *successive course* of every period, which is carried on by *seven epistles*, *seven seals*, *seven trumpets*, and *seven vials*, till all shall end in the glory of the *millenium*, and of the heavenly state.

And

And as my design is, through divine guidance, to set this, as well as the other parts of the New Testament, in as plain, practical, and easy a light, as I can, before the minds of *common Christians;* the practical view is intermingled and pursued, more than I have met with in any other paraphrase: But as large quotations of ancient authorities would not be much to their edification, and would swell this volume to a disproportionate bulk, which has already too far exceeded my expectation and design, I shall, generally, content myself with referring to the authorities which he, or others have quoted to support the application of histories to the hitherto fulfilled prophecies, in the course of the exposition. *The contents* of all at the head of each chapter, and as put together at the beginning of this volume, will give the reader a compendious view of the whole scheme.

CHAP. I.

A preface opens the divine original, design, and importance of this book, 1,—3. *The apostle* John, *the writer of it, salutes the seven churches of* Asia, *wishing them grace and peace from God the Father, Son, and Spirit, in distinctive economical characters of them,* 4,—8. *Declares when, where, and how, the revelations were made to him,* 9,—12. *And gives an account of his first vision, in which he saw Christ appearing in the midst of seven golden candlesticks, and holding seven stars in his right-hand, which were emblematical of the seven churches, and their respective pastors; and describes his appearing in such strong and lively figures of majesty and glory, as were suited to the encouragement of true believers, and the terror of backsliders and apostates,* 13,—20.

TEXT.

THE revelation of Jesus Christ, which God gave unto him, to shew unto his servants things which must shortly come to pass; and he sent and signified *it* by his

PARAPHRASE.

THIS book contains a prophetic revelation from Jesus Christ, the exalted Saviour, to whom, as man and the great prophet of the church, God the Father gave it in commission, * that he might make known to his servants and saints those things which must soon begin to be fulfilled, and then be carried on, through their several periods, in as certain predictions, as if they were present facts, relating chiefly to

NOTE.

* As Christ sustained the character of a *prophet* in human nature, God the Father is spoken of with great propriety, according to the divine economy, as giving this revelation to him, that, in the execution of his office, he might communicate it by his angel to *John:* But his understanding being infinite, as *God*, he, in that consideration of him, had no need of such a revelation; and he, who *sent his angel to shew these things*, is styled *the Lord God of the holy prophets*, (chap. xxii. 6.) which is a magnificent description of the only true God, and seems to be meant of the same divine person, who there says a little afterwards, (*ver.* 16.) *I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify these things*, and these things are here called *The revelation of Jesus Christ.*

his angel unto his servant John:

to the *Roman* empire, and his church as concerned with it, till they be completed at the consummation of all things: And Jesus, the sovereign Lord of all the angelic host, communicated them by the ministration of an holy angel, whom he sent with authority to notify them in the following visions to me, his servant and apostle, whose name is *John:*

2 Who bare record of the word of God, and of the testimony of Jesus Christ, and of all things that he saw.

2 Who have heretofore wrote an authentic historical account of Christ, as the eternal Word of God, (τον λογον τȣ Θεȣ) who *is God*, and *was made flesh, and dwelt amongst us;* (John i. 1, 14.) and have bore witness to him, under divine inspiration, as the only true Messiah, and to the substance of all the doctrines which he taught, and the miracles which I saw him perform to confirm them; and shall now faithfully relate the further revelations, which he has made to me.

3 Blessed *is* he that readeth, and they that hear the words of this prophecy, and keep those things which are written therein: for the time is at hand.

3 Happy is the man, who diligently reads and considers; and happier still are they, that attend to, receive, and understand the design and meaning of the important things pointed out in the prophecy, which I am about to deliver, and that observe and compare the predictions therein written, and the events of Providence answerable to them, and bear them upon their minds, and lay them to heart, with an humble and holy temper and deportment correspondent to them: For the time, in which some of them must begin to be accomplished, draws on apace; and, in comparison with the endless eternity that will follow, it cannot be long, before they shall all be as certainly fulfilled, as if they were instantly to come to pass.

4 JOHN to the seven churches which are in Asia: Grace *be* unto you, and peace from him which is, and which was, and which is to come; and from the seven spirits which are before his throne;

4 NOW, according to the revelation, and commission to write it, which Jesus Christ signified to me by his angel, I *John*, send the first part of it in the following epistles from him; one to each of the seven principal churches, that are planted in the lesser *Asia*. May the divine favour, and its saving effects and manifestations in a special work of grace in your souls; and may a sense of that free favour, together with all manner of happiness, temporal, and especially spiritual, unto eternal life, abound towards all and every one of you from God the Father, who, under the notion of deity, the character of which he sustains in the scheme of providence and salvation, * is to be considered as *from everlasting to everlasting*

NOTE.

* *Which is, and was, and is to come,* cannot, I think, be considered as a *personal* distinctive character of God the Father, merely as *the Father*, to the exclusion of the Son and Spirit; because, what is nearly equivalent to this, and appears to be full as much *personal*, is affirmed of *the Son*, as when it is said, that

everlasting God, (Ps. xc. 2.) invariably and unchangeably the same in his being and perfections, counsels and designs, and ever has been, is, and will be the same in his love and care of his people; and from the divine Spirit, who is the sovereign author of all spiritual gifts and graces, and of every diversity of his supernatural operations; (1 *Cor.* xii. 4, 7,—11.) which for *the variety* and *perfection of* them, and with a reference to the *seven churches*, may be called *seven*, under the denomination of *spirits*, as *that which is born of the Spirit is spirit;* (John iii. 6.) and who is ever present with the Father, as before his throne, ready to execute his will in every thing, and particularly in what relates to the safety and welfare of the church!

5 And from Jesus Christ *who is* the faithful witness, *and* the first begotten of the dead, and the prince of the kings of the earth: Unto him that loved us, and washed us from our sins in his own blood,

6 And hath made us kings and priests unto God and his Father; to him *be* glory and dominion for ever and ever. Amen.

5, 6 And may all these blessings be multiplied to you from Jesus Christ, through his mediation and merit, who, as a *prophet*, bears a faithful testimony to his Father's mind and will, and to his own character, as the Son of God and the true Messiah; and who, as a *priest*, having offered up himself a sacrifice for sin, was in token of its acceptance, raised from the dead, as the head of his body, the church, and as the very first that ever rose to immortal life, and *that* as the pattern, pledge, and first fruits of their resurrection to it after him; (see *Col.* i. 18. and the note on 1 *Cor.* xv. 20.) and, in consequence of this, he, as the due reward of his atoning death, was exalted to his throne of glory, with an all fulness of authority and dominion, as *King of kings and Lord of lords*, (chap. xix. 16.) and *the head of all principalities and powers* on earth, as well as in heaven, for the preservation and government of his people, and for restraining and subduing all his and their enemies! (*Eph.* i. 20,—22. and *Phil.* ii. 8,—11.) Unto him who has freely *loved us, and given himself for us, an offering and a sacrifice to God for a sweet smell-*

NOTE.

that he is *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, the first and the last*, ver. 8, 11, 17. and chap. xxii. 13.; and perhaps in *chap.* xxi. 6. But if it be there understood of *the Father*, it shews that the very same divine characters are *personally* applied to both (See the note below on *ver.* 8.)—But *he which is, and was, and is to come*, is a description of *the divine nature*, very properly applied to *the Father*, when he and the Son and Spirit are represented as sustaining their respective parts in all dispensations, particularly relating to *the church;* for, in this economy, God the Father is to be considered as *maintaining the prerogatives of deity*, and the Son and Spirit as acting either *from him*, or *towards him:* Accordingly, in the close of this verse, *the Spirit* is represented as *before the throne*, to act *from the Father*, toward the church; and in the following verses, *the Son* is represented as acting *toward the Father* for the church in his *priestly* office, as well as *from the Father* toward the church in his *prophetic* and *kingly* offices; and he is mentioned *last*, because the apostle designed to enlarge upon his character.

ing favour, (Eph. v. 2.) and has cleansed us from the guilt and power of our sins by an effectual application of the virtue of his own precious blood, which *he shed for the remission of them*, and for *redeeming us from all iniquity*; (Matth. xxvi. 28. and Tit. ii. 14.) and has advanced us, in our relation to God, even his Father, and our Father in him, to the high honour of *kings*, or *princes*, in a spiritual sense, that hold our dignities under him, in an entire dependence on him, and that *have power to prevail with God* in prayer, (*Gen.* xxxii. 28.) and are *heirs of the kingdom* of glory, (*Jam.* ii. 5.) and enabled to govern our own spirits, and to overcome sin, Satan, and the world, and are sanctified to his service, as *priests*, that have near access to God, and *offer up spiritual sacrifices acceptable to him by Jesus Christ*; (1 Pet. ii. 5.) unto this blessed, lovely, and loving Jesus, who is divinely glorious in himself and in his office, be ascribed all possible honour, and be paid all solemn acknowledgments of his sovereign and universal dominion, from henceforth to all eternity. *Amen*, so be it, and so it shall be.

7 Behold, he cometh with clouds; and every eye shall see him, and they *also* which pierced him: and all kindreds of the earth shall wail because of him: even so, Amen.

7 Observe, for your encouragement, the happy issue of all the following prophecies, to put an end to the afflicted state of the church, and complete their salvation, and to pour confusion upon all their enemies, the Lord Jesus will quickly appear with awful majesty to judge the world at his second coming, which will be like the *God who makes the clouds his chariot*, (Ps. civ. 3.) in illustrious clouds of heaven, with power and great glory, amidst surrounding angels, according to his own, and ancient predictions. (*Dan.* vii. 13. and *Matth.* xxiv. 30, 31.) And *that* appearance in human nature will be so open and visible, and so attempered by the clouds to mitigate the brightest rays of his divine glory, and accommodate them to corporal sight, that all mankind shall see him with their bodily eyes; and they particularly, that joined in his crucifixion, (*Zech.* xii. 10.) and never afterwards looked by faith to him, with penitent sorrow, for the remission of their sins, shall behold him with terror and anguish of heart for having despised and rejected him: And not only the tribes of *Israel*, but all persecuting powers, and people of all nations of the earth that remain in impenitence and unbelief, shall bitterly lament their miserable case, because of his coming to call them to a strict and severe account for all that they have said and done against him. Even so it certainly shall be; and all who now by faith look for it, and shall then be joyful spectators of it, cannot but consent to, and approve of it, as righte-

ous,

ous, ſaying, with ſolemn applauſe, *Amen*. (Chap. xvi. 7. and xix. 1, 2.)

8 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the ending, ſaith the Lord, which is, and which was, and which is to come, the Almighty.

8 To add the greater weight to theſe things, for the terror of his enemies, and the ſupport and comfort of true believers, he, who is to come in all this majeſty and glory, ſaid of himſelf, (*ver.* 11, 17. and *chap.* xxii. 12, 13.) * I am from eternity to eternity, am alſo the author and finiſher of the works of providence and grace, and of this revelation concerning many of them, and will accordingly accompliſh them in their order from the beginning to the end; and ſo may be fitly repreſented by the firſt and laſt letters of the *Greek* alphabet, which are *Alpha* and *Omega*: And he who ſaid theſe things, affirmed of himſelf, that he, in his divine nature and perfections, is the Lord God Almighty. (See *Iſa.* ix. 6.)

9 I John, who alſo am your brother, and companion in tribulation, and in the kingdom and patience of Jeſus Chriſt, was in the iſle that is called Patmos, for the word of God, and for the teſtimony of Jeſus Chriſt.

9 To proceed then to the *firſt part* of the revelation made to me, I *John* the evangeliſt and apoſtle, who am alſo your brother in the faith, and in the family of God; and am a fellow-ſufferer with all thoſe that are, or ever ſhall be, perſecuted for the ſake of Chriſt, and an heir with them of all the bleſſings of his kingdom of grace and glory, and am called and enabled with them, through his ſtrengthenings, to exerciſe all humble ſubmiſſion, reſignation, and patience in ſufferings for him, and quiet waiting for his glorious kingdom; I was baniſhed by the emperor *Domitian* to a confinement in the mountainous iſland of *Patmos*, merely for my adherence to Chriſt, and faithfully preaching his goſpel, whoſe name is called *the Word of God*, (chap. xix. 13.) and for the witneſs I bore to the truth and importance of the things that I had ſeen and heard from him. (*ver.* 2.)

10 I was in the Spirit on the Lord's day, and heard behind me a great voice, as of a trumpet.

10 During this ſtate of exile, on a certain firſt day of the week, which is commonly ſtyled, by way of eminence, *the Lord's Day*, for like reaſon as the inſtituted memorial of his death, is called *the Lord's Supper*, (1 Cor. xi. 20.) and which, according to the univerſal practice of goſpel-churches, I obſerved, in commemoration of his reſurrection from the dead, as a holy day to him, (ſee the notes on *John* xx. 26. *Acts*

NOTE.

* As *Chriſt* is the perſon laſt mentioned, and is repreſented as the revealer of theſe things to his ſervant *John*; (ver. 1.) ſo it plainly appears by the parallel places referred to in the paraphraſe, that theſe titles are aſcribed to him: And as *the Father* was deſcribed by like characters, *ver.* 4. (ſee the note there) it gives us a ſtrong atteſtation to the true and proper *divinity of the Son of God*, as the ſame in eſſence with the Father; and ſo may be conſidered as a deſcription of the ſame *deity*, whenever it is applied to either of them, not to diſtinguiſh one from the other of the adorable perſons of the Trinity, as ſuch, but to diſtinguiſh the *Divine Being* from all that are not by nature God, as it is uſed for that purpoſe in a deſcription of God abſolutely, as ſuch, *Iſa.* xli. 4. and xlviii. 12.

Acts xx. 6. and *Col.* ii. 16.) I was on that day in a ſpiritual frame, and employed in religious meditations and exerciſes; and, while I was ſo, the ſpirit of prophecy came upon me, (as it formerly had done on ancient prophets) and revealed the following things to me; which were introduced by my being alarmed with the hearing of an exceeding loud articulate voice behind me, like the ſtrong and ſolemn ſound of a trumpet, ſuch as was heard at the giving of the law on Mount *Sinai.* (Exod. xix. 16.)

11 Saying, I am Alpha, and Omega, the firſt and the laſt: and, What thou ſeeſt write in a book, and ſend *it* unto the ſeven churches which are in Aſia; unto Epheſus, and unto Smyrna, and unto Pergamos, and unto Thyatira, and unto Sardis, and unto Philadelphia, and unto Laodicea.

11 The voice which I perfectly and diſtinctly heard and underſtood, ſaid to me, I, that Jeſus, for whoſe ſake you are baniſhed to the iſle *Patmos*, am he, who called myſelf, (*ver.* 8. ſee the note there) and now repeat it, the more deeply to impreſs you with a ſolemn reverence of me, and regard to my words, even I am *Alpha* and *Omega*, the author and finiſher of all things, relating to the world and the church, from the beginning of the creation to the end of ages. And he then ſtrictly charged me, ſaying, Take care that you faithfully record in a book the things which I am making known in viſion to you for the inſtruction and admonition of the univerſal church; and ſend ſuch particulars of it, in my name, to the ſeven moſt noted churches of *Aſia*, as belong to them reſpectively, and they are moſt immediately concerned in, namely, to the churches which are ſeated at the following cities; to that at *Epheſus*, and that at *Smyrna*, and that at *Pergamos*, and that at *Thyatira*, and that at *Sardis*, and that at *Philadelphia*, and that at *Laodicea*.

12 And I turned to ſee the voice that ſpake with me. And being turned, I ſaw ſeven golden candleſticks;

12 And thereupon I turned myſelf about with eager deſire to ſee from whence this awful voice proceeded, which directed itſelf to me, and having ſet my face that way, I had a clear ſupernatural viſion of a candleſtick of pure gold, which may be ſpoken of in the *plural* number, as conſiſting of ſeven branches to hold ſeven lamps, anſwerable to the number of the churches, to which I was ordered to write, and like the ſeven branches that were made by divine appointment, and placed in the tabernacle of the Lord, (*Exod.* xxv. 31, 32.) and may be conſidered as emblematical of the light of doctrine, holineſs, and comfort, which the churches receive from Chriſt, and hold forth to the world, as they are all one in him.

13 And in the midſt of the ſeven candleſticks, *one* like unto the Son of man, clothed with a garment down to the foot, and girt about the paps

13 And as the Jehovah of *Iſrael* dwelt in that holy houſe, and the prieſt uſed to ſtand in the midſt of the branches when he lighted the lamps, and particularly the middle one, which went right up from the ſhaft among them; (*Numb.* viii. 2, 3. ſee *Ainſworth* there) ſo I plainly beheld, in the midſt of theſe emblematical candleſticks, a divinely glorious perſon in the

paps with a golden girdle.

the form of an illuſtrious man, which left me under no manner of doubt but that it was the Meſſiah, who was propheſied of, and frequently ſpoke of himſelf, as *the Son of Man:* He appeared to me as clothed with a magnificent, rich, and ſplendid *robe*, like unto, though of incomparably greater luſtre than that of the *Jewiſh* high prieſt; a garment which covered him all over down to his feet, and was a fit emblem of his prieſtly robe of glorious and perfect righteouſneſs, which covers him, and all his members, even down to the loweſt and meaneſt of them: And to ſhew how near the concerns of his church lie to his heart, and how ready he is to diſcharge his prieſtly office on their behalf; he appeared as girded about his breaſt with a golden girdle of ineſtimable worth and beauty, far ſurpaſſing the curious and coſtly girdle of the high prieſt's *ephod*, (Exod. xxxix. 5.) with which he uſed to gird himſelf over his breaſt.

14 His head and *his* hairs *were* white like wool, as white as ſnow; and his eyes *were* as a flame of fire;

14 The appearance of his *perſon* alſo was tranſcendently majeſtic and glorious, like that of *the Ancient of days*, as repreſented in viſion to the prophet *Daniel*, (chap vii. 9.) His head and his hair upon it, ſhone like the *Shechinah* of old, which was always an emblem of the divine majeſty and glory; and his hairs appeared like a venerable crown, as pure and clean as the fineſt waſhed wool, and ſhining with a luſtre as dazzling as the whiteſt ſnow; and his eyes ſparkled, and as it were ſtreamed out with light as piercing and awful, as the brighteſt flame of a ſtrong and clear fire; a lively emblem of his penetrating wiſdom, knowledge, and influence to diſcover the ſecrets of all hearts, and to purify and refine them, or elſe to conſume them, as the hotteſt fire doth the materials that are capable of being acted upon by it.

15 And his feet like unto fine braſs, as if they burned in a furnace; and his voice as the ſound of many waters.

15 And his feet ſeemed to be, for ſtrength and ſteadineſs, purity and beauty, in all his ways and diſpenſations, to the joy of the ſaints, and terror of his enemies, like ſolid pillars of burniſhed metal, that had been thoroughly melted and refined, and appeared as red hot, as though it were ſtill burning in a fiery furnace: And his voice, according to the language of his word and providence, was as loud and thundering, dreadful and aſtoniſhing to the wicked, as the roaring of the ſea, when its huge collection of waters are thrown into the moſt violent commotion by a ſtorm.

16 And he had in his right hand ſeven ſtars: and out of his mouth went a ſharp two-edged ſword: and his countenance *was*

16 And, to add ſtill further to the majeſty and grandeur of his appearance, as alſo to ſhew his effectual care of his faithful ſervants, he was repreſented to me as holding in his right hand, the emblem of favour and power for preſervation and guidance, ſeven ſtars, that were upheld and enlightened by him, to be the

was as the sun shineth in his strength.

the ministerial and subordinate lights of their respective seven churches in *Asia;* which is likewise applicable to all succeeding pastors, as he has promised to *be with them always, even to the end of the world:* (Matth. xxviii. 30.) And there seemed to issue out of his mouth a sharp sword of two edges which cut on both sides; a proper emblem of the power of both his law and gospel, of the justice of his government, and the efficacy of his word, as proceeding from his mouth, for cutting sinners to the heart, and cutting off all superfluity of naughtiness from believers, and for cutting down his implacable enemies: And, as to the light of his countenance, it was as bright and dazzling, and its smiles were as cheering and reviving as the sun in the firmament, when it shines in its full strength with unclouded beams at noon-day, like his appearance on the mount of transfiguration, (*Matth.* xvii. 2.) and suitable to his character, as *the Sun of Righteousness, that rises with healing under his wings.* (Malach. iv. 2.)

17 And when I saw him, I fell at his feet as dead. And he laid his right hand upon me, saying unto me, Fear not; I am the first and the last.

17 And when in my vision I beheld this awful and glorious appearance of the Lord Jesus, I was so surprised and overwhelmed at it, under a consciousness of my own guilt and unworthiness, that all the powers of animal nature failed; and I, like one in a swoon, fell prostrate at his feet ready to expire. He then, knowing, and having compassion on my infirmity, seemed to stretch forth his right hand, the emblem of his gracious and almighty power, to revive and raise me up; and said, to encourage and comfort me, as the angel did to *Daniel,* (chap. x. 10,—12.) Do not give way to distressing fear, as though I meant any ill to you, or to my church and people! No, I the divine Saviour, am unchangeably the same in myself, in my office, and in my love and care, as I ever have been; and as I have begun, so I will perfect all that concerns both you and them, and all dispensations relating to them.

18 *I am* he that liveth, and was dead; and behold, I am alive for evermore, Amen: and have the keys of hell and of death.

18 I am the great and only mediator, who ever live, as the *living One* (ὁ ζῶν) in my divine nature, to secure the interests of my church, and was once put to death in my human nature, to make reconciliation with God by my atoning sacrifice for them: But observe with faith, hope, delight, and holy confidence in me, that I am now risen, and live for ever in that nature which died, as their high priest and righteous advocate, and as their Lord and King: This is ratified in heaven, and you ought to say, *Amen.* And to satisfy you that all shall end in the greatest happiness of my people, I further assure you, that, in consequence of my death and resurrection, I have the power

power of death and of the invisible world, to save or destroy the souls of them that are in a separate state, and to raise their dead bodies from the grave, like one who has the keys, which are an emblem of right and power, (*Isa.* xxii. 22.) for unlocking their doors, and for opening or shutting the gate of heaven, to admit those into it that die in the Lord, and to exclude those from it that die in their sins, and shut them up with the devil and his angels.

19 Write the things which thou hast seen, and the things which are, and the things which shall be hereafter.

19 He then repeated his charge to me, (*ver.* 11.) saying, Write all these things down, which you have seen exhibited in this vision, that they may be preserved for the instruction of the present and future generations; and record the things which are further to be revealed to you, relating to the present state of the church; as also the things which shall certainly come to pass, in their proper series, from age to age, till time shall be no more.

20 The mystery of the seven stars which thou saweſt in my right hand, and the seven golden candlesticks. The seven stars are the angels of the seven churches: and the seven candlesticks which thou saweſt, are the seven churches.

20 Now, to explain *two* of the principal emblems that you have seen in this vision, The covert meaning of the figurative representations, which have been made of the seven stars that were held in my right hand, and of the seven branches of the golden candlestick, is this: By *the seven stars*, are signified my *seven messengers*, (αγγελοι) or *embassadors* to, or *pastors* of the seven churches, who have the honour of being set over them in the Lord, and, who as stars, which I have lighted up and taken into my favour and protection, are to shine, like angels, in the purity of their doctrine and holiness of their lives, for the direction of those that are committed to their charge: And by the *seven branches of the candlestick*, are most immediately meant the seven churches of *Asia* themselves, and, by just construction, all other churches, that are, or may be in like circumstances, and are united together under me, as their head, in one body, even as the branches of the candlestick in the tabernacle were in one stem, that they, by my ministring servants in future times, as well as in the present age, may be enlightened with the knowledge of salvation; and may *hold forth the word of life* in their holy profession, worship, discipline, soundness of faith, and moral conversation to all around them. (*Phil.* ii. 16.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How worthy is every revelation, which Christ has made from God the Father, of our serious, humble study, and religious regard! And how happy is it to understand and embrace it as a certain truth, which shall have its accomplishment in due season! The records of it lie in the word of God, and are faithfully handed down to us for our benefit, as delivered by his inspired servants.——All sincere ministers of the gospel, who are ordinarily most spiritual, whilst engaged in a religious observation of the Lord's day, heartily wish and pray for all the blessings of grace, with

the beſt of every kind of proſperity, from the Father, Son, and Spirit, to all the churches of the ſaints.——How auguſt and endearing is the character of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, who, in his divine being and excellencies, is eternally the Living One, and is the author and miniſter of all diſpenſations of Providence and grace; and who, in the greatneſs of his love, died, as man, to ſave his people from their ſins; and is riſen from the dead, to make them kings and prieſts to God, his Father, and as a pledge of their riſing to eternal life after him. when they ſhall behold him in all his glory! But, alas! for ſinners, that reject him, With what terror will they ſee him at his ſecond coming! They will lament and wail for all their neglects of him, and for all that they have done againſt him. In the mean while, the church of Chriſt muſt expect to meet with various troubles, as their common lot, for the trial of their faith and patience: But O what rich encouragement have they to bear them with calm ſubmiſſion and compoſure, when they think of the magnificent repreſentation, which Chriſt made of himſelf to his ſervant *John*, as a divine perſon, as omniſcient and almighty, as walking in his churches to take care of the faithful among them, as enlightening and aſſiſting their paſtors, and as fighting againſt his and their enemies with the ſword of his mouth, till he ſhall utterly deſtroy them! And what a comfort is it to true believers to be aſſured, that he who died to redeem them to God by his blood, is now alive, and lives eternally, with all power in his hands, to apply the fruits of his redemption, and to order the iſſues of life and death, and the inviſible ſtate, to their joy, and the confuſion of the wicked and ungodly! To him be glory and dominion for ever and ever. *Amen.*

CHAP. II.

The apoſtle, according to Chriſt's command, ſends epiſtles inſcribed to the paſtors of the churches in Aſia, *with prophetic warnings and encouragements, ſuitable to their then preſent ſtate, (in which ſome things are commended, and others reproved) and relating to what they were to expect in a way of mercy, or of judgment, according to their reſpective faithfulneſs, or not, for time to come, as particularly the church at* Epheſus, 1,—7. *At* Smyrna, 8,—11. *At* Pergamos, 12,—17. *And at* Thyatira, 18,—29.

TEXT.

UNTO the angel of the church of Epheſus, write, Theſe things ſaith he that holdeth the ſeven ſtars in his right hand, who walketh in the midſt of the ſeven golden candleſticks;

PARAPHRASE.

AS the Lord Jeſus ordered me to write to the ſeven churches of *Aſia* about things, which are already found in them, and will ſoon come to paſs, (*chap.* i. 11, 19.) and which they are moſt immediately concerned in, I ſhall begin with that, which I am enjoined to direct for their uſe to the paſtor of the church at *Epheſus*, * the metropolis of the *proconſular Aſia*. The things contained herein are dictated by him, who appeared in viſion to me, (*chap.* i. 13, 16.) as holding his ſeven *Aſiatic* miniſters, and,

NOTE.

* Though there were ſeveral paſtors or *elders* of the church at *Epheſus*, (Acts xx. 17. ſee the note there, and on *Philip.* i. 1.) yet this epiſtle, like the other *ſix*, is directed in the *ſingular number* to *the angel*, meſſenger, or paſtor of the church, becauſe their work and office was one and the ſame, and ſo they were all included in the inſcription; and, perhaps, one of them was moſt eminent and remarkable for gifts, graces, and ſeniority, though of the *ſame order* with the reſt; and therefore the epiſtle was directed to him to be communicated to his aſſociates in the paſtoral office, and by them all to the church.

and, by consequence, all other faithful pastors, in his right hand of power and favour, to uphold, conduct, protect, and take care of them, and to make them, by his light and influence, like shining stars in the purity of their doctrine, and holiness of their lives; and he appeared as intimately present and conversant with his seven churches of that province, as represented under the emblem of seven golden candlesticks, which being a number of *perfection*, may also be fitly applied to all Christian churches, as the objects of his special notice and regard, to observe and commune with them, to supply them with the oil of grace, and trim their lamps, that they may burn with the brighter light, and to take pleasure in what is good, and correct what is amiss in them.

2 I know thy works, and thy labour, and thy patience, and how thou canst not bear them which are evil: and thou hast tried them which say they are apostles, and are not; and hast found them liars:

2 He says particularly to you, the pastor, * inclusive of the church at *Ephesus*, I am thoroughly acquainted with, and approve of your works of righteousness, and the pains you have taken to maintain and propagate my pure gospel, and the interests of my kingdom, and your bearing all the persecutions that come upon you for my name's sake, with holy fortitude, constancy, and patient hope of deliverance in due season: And I with pleasure observe your zeal for my glory, and against sin and error, that you cannot be easy with those, nor permit them to continue in church-communion, who broach corrupt doctrines, and practise immoralities: And, to shew that your zeal is according to knowledge, you have closely enquired into the principles and manners of those who arrogantly assume to themselves the honour of an apostolic commission; and you have proved that they are not what they vainly pretend to; and have really found them to be mere impostors, that have no truth or sincerity in them.

3 And hast born, and hast patience, and for my name's sake hast laboured, and hast not fainted.

3 And, to your further commendation, he says, I take notice that you have bravely bore up under the opposition of false apostles, and have been patiently resigned to the will of God under all the troubles you have met with from them; and have laid yourself out with great diligence, from a principle of love to me and my cause, to stand your ground against all contradiction; and have hitherto so constantly persisted therein, as not to sink, or be discouraged, under the weight of the heaviest of your trials.

4 Nevertheless, I have *somewhat* against thee, because

4 But, notwithstanding all this, he says, There is one thing much amiss in you, on account of which I have a special controversy with you, and for which I

NOTE.

* Christ ordered the seven epistles to be sent to the *seven churches*; (chap. i. 11.) and therefore though directed to the *pastors*, the churches themselves are to be considered as concerned and included in them.

cause thou hast left thy first love.

must sharply reprove you; because, of late, you have grown cool and indifferent in your affection to me, and my people and cause, to the great decay of that fervent love, which worked in you, and discovered itself by suitable fruits and effects, in the earliest days of your espousals to me.

5 Remember therefore from whence thou art fallen, and repent, and do the first works; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will remove thy candlestick out of his place, except thou repent.

5 Reflect therefore with the utmost impartiality on your shameful declensions and revolts from your former love and zeal; think seriously how much of the purity, pleasure, and life of religion you have lost by them; and be deeply humbled and grieved for them; and bring forth fruits meet for repentance, in returning to the lively exercises of faith, love, and obedience, which you honourably professed at your conversion: Otherwise I will take away all your gospel-privileges, and unchurch you, that you may no longer be like a candlestick, to hold forth the light of truth, holiness, and comfort: You may certainly depend upon my doing this; unless it be prevented by a timely humiliation, repentance, and reformation.

6 But this thou hast, that thou hatest the deeds of the Nicolaitans, which I also hate.

6 But I observe, and own for your encouragement, that, amidst all the decays of your first love to that which is good, you still retain a hatred to that which is notoriously sinful, and particularly, have a high detestation of the idolatrous and filthy tenets and practices of the sect of the *Nicolaitans* *, which are so directly contrary to my holy nature, will, and word, that I myself also have them in the utmost abhorrence.

7 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the tree of life, which is in the midst of the paradise of God.

7 Whoever is capable of hearing, and desirous of knowing things of so great concernment as these, let him seriously consider, and lay to heart, the truth and importance of what the holy Spirit of prophecy herein says, not only to this, † but to all the churches of the saints, that are, or ever may be in like circumstances to the end of the world. Upon the whole then, he, and he only, who, in humble dependence on my grace, wars a good warfare, unto the subduing of his corruptions, and the temptations of Satan and his instruments, and of this evil world, and so

NOTES.

* Interpreters are much at a loss to determine, whether the sect of *Nicolaitans* sprang from one *Nicolas*; and if so, whether it were one of the first deacons, (*Acts* vi. 5.) who bore that name, and had apostatized, or not: But they all agree that the doctrines, which these persons taught, under a profession of Christianity, and their practices answerable thereunto, were abominably vicious and idolatrous.

† As this admonition to *the churches* is added at the close of every epistle to the seven churches of *Asia*, it intimates that the things wrote therein are to be applied to all other churches, in every place and age, so far as their state and condition is like that of the churches to which either of these epistles is addressed. But I cannot think that the different states of succeeding churches would fall out, just in the same order of time, as answers to the order of these epistles. (See the preface to the paraphrase on this book.)

so *endures to the end, shall be saved.* (Matth. x. 22.) I will freely grant unto him all the benefits of my purchase, in the sublime and substantial honours and delights of the heavenly state, with an irreversible confirmation in it, even unto eternal life; which may be considered, in allusion to the happiness that man in innocence would have enjoyed, and been confirmed in for ever, if, after having fulfilled his course of trial, he had eat of *the tree of life*, (Gen. ii. 9. and iii. 24.) which was in the midst of the earthly paradise of God's own appointing and forming for his abode, as he has the heavenly one to be the habitation of his saints with himself in blissful glory for ever.

8 And unto the angel of the church in Smyrna, write, These things saith the first and the last, which was dead and is alive.

8 And the *second* epistle, which Christ ordered me to write in his name, is directed to the pastor of the church at *Smyrna*, another *Asiatic* city, relating to their spiritual concerns, in which they are to be told, that the things contained therein are his own true sayings, who, according to his representation of himself, (*chap.* i. 11, 17, 18.) was before all things, and will come to judge the world at the last day; who also died for his people's sins, that he might redeem them to God by his blood, and is now risen and lives again, for evermore in a state of exaltation, to secure all their interests for time and eternity.

9 I know thy works, and tribulation, and poverty, (but thou art rich) and *I know* the blasphemy of them which say they are Jews, and are not, but *are* the synagogue of Satan.

9 I am perfectly acquainted with, and take a pleasing notice of, your works and labours of love for my name's sake; as also of your enduring severe persecutions with Christian courage and patience; and I behold with tenderness and sympathy the extreme want to which you are reduced by the violence of the times, and which you meekly submit to, as being poor in spirit, while in the opinion of the world you are poor and miserable wretches: (But you are *rich in faith, and heirs of the kingdom which God has promised to them that love him:* (James ii. 5.) And, on the contrary, I observe, with just indignation, the false, hypocritical, and blasphemous pretences of those, who call themselves *Christian-Jews*, as if they, like the ancient church of *Israel*, were the only covenant-people of God, and who maintain *Jewish* rites and ceremonies, which are abrogated under the gospel state; but they are so far from being the only, or even any true members of my church, that they belong to it merely in name and profession; and, in reality, are devoted to the service of the devil, and do his work, under his influence, in propagating iniquity and error, and in persecuting my people.

10 Fear none of those things which thou shalt suffer; behold,

10 I, who am able and ready to support and comfort you, under all your tribulations, admonish and charge you, to be no way terrified or disheartened at

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behold, the devil shall cast some of you into prison, that ye may be tried; and ye shall have tribulation ten days: be thou faithful unto death, and I will give thee a crown of life.

the worst, that you may still further suffer from these wicked men. Take notice, I now tell you before hand, to fore-arm you against them, that your great adversary, the devil, will prevail by his instruments to persecute some of you, even unto imprisonment and bonds, which I shall permit for the trial and improvement of your graces, and particularly of your faith: (1 *Pet.* i. 7.) And though your grievous troubles will last for a considerable time; * yet let *none of these things move you;* (Acts xx. 24.) but maintain your dependence upon, and fidelity to me, even unto martyrdom itself, and I will make you a rich amends for the loss of a temporal life, by crowning you with all the felicity and glory of an immortal one.

11 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches. He that overcometh, shall not be hurt of the second death.

11 He who is willing to know his own state and condition, let him seriously attend to, and consider the cautions, encouragements, and promises which my Spirit has given to all churches, of like character with this. (See the note on *ver.* 7.) Whoever he be that obtains the victory over all his and my enemies, though he may not escape temporal death, shall feel none of the miseries of an eternal hell, which in distinction from that of the body, and as coming after it, may be called the second death, and is worst of all.

12 And to the angel of the church in Pergamos, write, These things saith he which hath the sharp sword with two edges;

12 And the *third* epistle, which I was ordered to write in Christ's name, is directed to the pastor of the church at *Pergamos*, another city of *Asia*, in which he says, The following things are what I speak, who appeared in vision, (*chap.* i. 16.) with a sharp two-edged sword, as proceeding out of my mouth to execute vengeance, by my word and providence, upon backsliders, apostates, and all mine obstinate enemies, and to defend those that hold fast their integrity according to, and by means of my word.

13 I know thy works, and where thou dwellest, *even* where Satan's seat *is:* and thou holdest fast my name, and hast not denied

13 I am a kind and careful observer of every good thing done by you, and take the more special notice of it, to your commendation, and my own glory, as I perfectly know, that you are situated in the most ensnaring and dangerous circumstances amongst a people, and under civil governors, that are, as it were, the

NOTE.

* It is very uncertain to what precise period these *ten days* are to be referred; whether in the sense of a natural day, or of a day for a year; whether, with some, to the persecution under *Diocletian;* or, with others, to that under *Trajan;* or, with others, to the *ten* heathen persecutions. But as ten is a number of multitude, and all *units* end in *ten;* and it is often used in Scripture *indefinitely*, sometimes for *many*, (see *Gen.* xxxi. 7, 41. 1 *Sam.* i. 8. *Job* xix. 3. and *Eccles.* vii. 19.) and at others for few, (see *Gen.* xxiv. 55. *Lev.* xxvi. 26. *Amos* v. 3. and vi. 9.) a *certain* number being put for an uncertain; I therefore incline to think, upon the whole, that *ten* is not here to be taken *literally* for that exact number either of *days* or years, but for an *indefinite* number of them.

nied my faith, even in those days wherein Antipas *was* my faithful martyr, who was slain among you, where Satan dwelleth.

the throne (ὁ θρονος) on which Satan sits and rules with uncommon sway; and yet, through my superior influence, you continue stedfast in your holy profession of my name, and have not departed from, much less renounced my gospel, nor your humble dependence upon me; no, not in those days of the hottest persecution, in which my faithful servant, the well known *Antipas*,* bravely bore his testimony to me, and my doctrine and ways with his last breath, and with the last drop of his blood, when he suffered martyrdom at your city; which is a plain proof of the powerful dominion that Satan exercises over his subjects there, in whom he works unto the producing of such cruel outrage against me and my followers.

14 But I have a few things against thee, because thou hast there them that hold the doctrine of Balaam, who taught Balak to cast a stumbling-block before the children of Israel, to eat things sacrificed unto idols, and to commit fornication.

14 Nevertheless, there are a few very blameable things among you, which I have to complain of, and reprove you for; because there are some of your church that fall in with the corruptions of the day, through a worldly-minded and prevaricating temper, like that of *Balaam*, the infatuated prophet, who, contrary to the plain will of God, and the convictions of his own conscience, used stratagems, and instructed *Balak*, to ensnare and pervert the children of *Israel*, and draw them into the sins of idolatry, and fornication with the daughters of *Moab*. (Numb. xxv. 1, 2. and xxxi. 16.) In like manner, these temporizing Christians, contrary to my known orders, (*Acts* xv. 29.) go into the practice of fasting upon sacrifices that are offered to the honour of heathen idols, and of committing fornication, as though they were no crimes.

15 So hast thou also them that hold the doctrine of the Nicolaitans, which thing I hate.

15 Yea, what is still more heinous and provoking, there are some of you that openly espouse and maintain the corrupt principles of the *Nicolaitans*, which, as has been said, I have the utmost abhorrence of. (See the note on ver. 6.)

16 Repent; or else I will come unto thee quickly, and will fight against them with the sword of my mouth.

16 It is high time for the guilty persons among you, and for you as a church, to be heartily grieved and humbled for, and to repent of, and reform these abominable evils: In case you do not, I will soon come forth, in the way of my judgments, to punish you; and, according to the emblem of the sword of my mouth, (*chap.* i. 16.) will use my sword of war, and of justice, to cut off those bold offenders, as certainly as a plague was sent to destroy the congregation of

NOTE.

* As ecclesiastical history does not inform us who this *Antipas* was, and he is no where else mentioned in Scripture, we must be contented to be ignorant of it; but he was doubtless some eminent martyr lately put to death, and well known at *Pergamos* in those days.

of the Lord for following the counsel of *Balaam.* (Numb. xxxi. 16.)

17 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches: To him that overcometh will I give to eat of the hidden manna, and will give him a white stone, and in the stone a new name written, which no man knoweth, saving he that receiveth *it*.

17 Whoever is desirous to know how things stand between God and his own soul, let him carefully consider these solemn warnings and kind encouragements, which the Spirit of prophecy herein speaks to all persons and churches, that are in like circumstances: (see the note on *ver.* 7.) To him, who, prizing my favour and relying on my assistance, shall gain the conquest over all the temptations of the day, in which his lot is cast, I will grant the refreshments and consolations of communion with me, who am *the true and living Bread which came down from heaven;* (John vi. 32,—51.) and will make him partaker of all the blessings of spiritual and eternal life, which consist of joys that strangers intermeddle not with, and are safely *hid*, as precious treasures, *with me in God*, (Col. iii 3.) and were typified by the *manna*, that *Israel* lived upon in the wilderness, a pot of which was *laid up before the Lord, and hid in the ark:* (Exod. xvi. 33.) And I will publicly absolve him from the guilt of all his sins, and give him boldness, like a conqueror, in the day of judgment; * which may be illustrated by the *white stone*, that is wont to be given to such as are acquitted, in courts of judicature, from all charges brought against them; and by the *white stone*, that is given to conquerors in the *Grecian* games: And I will give him a new name of dignity and honour, even that of a Christian, and a *child of God*, and *heir of glory*, as though it were engraven on the white stone; the pleasure and happiness of which none can conceive, relish, or prize suitable to its worth and excellence, but the person himself, who is made partaker of it, and knows it as his own.

18 And unto the angel of the church in Thyatira, write, These things saith the Son of God, who hath his eyes like unto a flame of fire, and his feet *are* like fine brass;

18 And the *fourth* epistle, which our blessed Lord ordered me to write, as from him, is inscribed to the pastor of the church at *Thyatira*, another city of *Asia*, saying, The things that are contained in this epistle are the words of the eternal Son of God, who is by nature God, and who, to signify his infinite wisdom and penetrating knowledge of all hearts, persons, and things, appeared as with a bright flame of fire darting from his eyes; and to signify the purity, strength, and steadiness of all the outgoings of his providence, the firm support of his people in the furnace of

NOTE.

* Here seems to be an allusion to the custom of those days, in which a *white stone* was given on the occasions hinted in the paraphrase. (See Dr. *Hammond*'s note on the place.)

of affliction, and his dreadful juſtice in trampling upon his enemies, appeared as having feet like poliſhed red-hot, bright, and burning metal. (*Chap.* i. 14, 15.)

19 I know thy works, and charity, and ſervice, and faith, and thy patience, and thy works; and the laſt *to be* more than the firſt.

19 I, ſays he, take particular notice, and highly approve of all the good things done by you, and of all the love to me, and my people and cauſe, which works as a powerful principle within you; and of all the ſervices, which from that principle you have performed for the relief of my afflicted members, and for my honour and glory; and of all the faith whereby you ſtedfaſtly adhere to me and my doctrine; and of all the patience under various tribulations for my ſake, which you have remarkably exerciſed; and of the whole of your conduct and behaviour, in whatever you have been laudably engaged: And I, with great pleaſure, obſerve that, inſtead of having left your firſt love, like the church at *Epheſus*, (ver. 4.) theſe amiable things are on the increaſing and improving hand; ſo as that your laſt works of piety, love, and obedience are more numerous, eminent, and ſpiritual, than when you firſt entered upon the profeſſion of my name.

20 Notwithſtanding, I have a few things againſt thee, becauſe thou ſuffereſt that woman Jezebel, which calleth herſelf a propheteſs, to teach and to ſeduce my ſervants to commit fornication, and to eat things ſacrificed unto idols.

20 But, though I mention theſe many good things for your encouragement, and the honour of my grace in you, I muſt, nevertheleſs, ſharply reprove you for a few others of a contrary nature, that you may not be lifted up with pride, or think yourſelf perfect; and eſpecially for *one* great offence, in which you are exceedingly to blame; becauſe you too much connive at, and ſhew countenance to a ſet of wicked perſons, under an infamous ring-leader, who take to themſelves the character of inſpired teachers; but are really of the ſame vile ſpirit and temper with that infamous woman *Jezebel* * who ſlew the prophets of the Lord, and ſeduced king *Ahab* to idolatry, and practiſed whoredom and witchcraft: (1 *Kings* xvi. 31. and xviii. 4, 13. and xxi. 25. and 2 *Kings* ix. 22.) And theſe pretenders to a ſpirit of prophecy are tamely permitted to broach their errors, and to corrupt and draw away my profeſſing people to the like ſins of idolatry and uncleanneſs, and, by all

NOTE.

* I rather think that here is *an alluſion* to the wicked practices of *Jezebel*, whoſe name is transferred to theſe ſeducers, becauſe their character is like her's, though they pretended to be inſpired prophets, than that any perſon of this name, then living, was pointed at. However, *Grotius* tells us, that ſome manuſcripts read *thy wife*; (γυναικα σου) and ſome have thought that this woman was the wife of the Biſhop of that church, and was called *Jezebel*, becauſe ſhe was the author of evil things, and the wife of the chief man of the church, as the ancient *Jezebel* was of king *Ahab*.

all arts of subtilty and cruelty, to seduce them into acts of fornication in a literal, as well as spiritual sense, and into eating of such meats as have been offered up, and devoted to the honour of fictitious gods and their images, both which are contrary to my orders about the purity of manners and worship. (*Acts* xv. 29.)

21 And I gave her space to repent of her fornication, and she repented not.

21 And though I have hitherto bore long with these *Jezebel*-like seducers, that they may have means and opportunities for conviction, repentance, and reformation of their crimes; yet they continued to be hardened and impenitent, and still persisted in their evil courses.

22 Behold, I will cast her into a bed, and them that commit adultery with her into great tribulation, except they repent of their deeds.

22 But as certainly as the threatning, which the Lord denounced against *Jezebel*, was executed after some time, in her tremendous death; (1 *Kings* xxi. 23. and 2 *Kings* ix. 36.) so, be it known to these corrupters of the Christian faith and practice, that in due season I will severely punish them, as persons, whom in my wrath I will bring to a painful, sick, and death-bed; and will inflict like dreadful calamities upon all those who suffer themselves to be seduced into the commission of the same adulterous and idolatrous iniquities with them, unless it be prevented by a timely repentance and forsaking of the evil of their doings.

23 And I will kill her children with death, and all the churches shall know that I am he which searcheth the reins and hearts: and I will give unto every one of you according to your works.

23 And as the sons of that wicked king *Ahab* were slain, according to the Lord's threatning to bring evil upon his house, for the iniquities which he was drawn into by *Jezebel*'s enticements; (1 *Kings* xxi. 29. and 2 *Kings* x. 6, 7, 10, 11.) so surely will I bring utter destruction upon the disciples and followers of these depravers of the Christian doctrine and manners, as well as upon themselves; and will do it in such exemplary executions, as shall convince all the churches, which know or hear of it, that I am indeed a *divine person*, whose prerogative it is to look into the secret thoughts of all men's hearts, (*Acts* i. 24. compared with 1 *Kings* viii. 39.) and search out all the hypocrisy that lurks in their inmost parts, in their principles, motives, and ends: And I will deal impartially with every one of you, who make a profession of my name, as well as with all others, according to the nature and degree of your doings, whether they be good or bad.

24 But unto you I say, and unto the rest in Thyatira, As many as have not this doctrine, and which have not known the depths

24 But I assure you for the encouragement of the faithful among you, and of all others in *Thyatira*, though not actually members of your church, even every one that has not fallen in with, but heartily opposed and rejected the above-mentioned pernicious doctrine; and has not consented to, or approved, much less

depths of Satan, as they speak; I will put upon you none other burden.

leſs given into the practice, of the diabolical deluſions, which theſe impoſtors propagate, with the deepeſt intrigue and ſubtilty under Satan's influence; and which they boaſt of as the products of profound knowledge and wiſdom, while they are indeed myſteries of iniquity; I ſay to you, who are my faithful ſervants, that I will put no further injunctions or reſtraints upon you, than ſtill to keep clear of theſe abominations; nor the burden of any more myſteries, laws, or ceremonies, than are already eſtabliſhed in my word.

25 But that which ye have *already*, hold faſt till I come.

25 I only inſiſt upon it, that ye ſtill perſevere in, and ſtedfaſtly maintain your faith, love, and obedience, together with the purity of the doctrines and precepts, which ye have already received from me, and not count them grievous, till I ſhall come the ſecond time to your ſalvation.

26 And he that overcometh, and keepeth my works unto the end, to him will I give power over the nations:

26 And whoever he be that, on theſe encouragements, ſtands his ground againſt, and comes off victorious, over all temptations to the contrary, and perſeveres in the faith and holineſs of the goſpel to the end of his warfare, I will make him a ſharer in my conqueſts, and he ſhall *have dominion* over all the wicked of the nations *in the morning* of the reſurrection. (*Pſ.* xlix. 14.)

27 (And he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: as the veſſels of a potter ſhall they be broken to ſhivers) even as I received of my Father.

27 And as in my office-capacity, in which I am conſtituted King of the church, I have received a grant, with full power and authority from my heavenly Father, to have *the heathen for mine inheritance*, and to *break* my obſtinate enemies among them, as *with a rod of iron, and daſh them to pieces as a potter's veſſel;* (Pſ. ii. 6, 8, 9.) ſo I will give power to every ſubject of my kingdom, as acting under me, and by my aſſiſtance and authority, to prevail againſt them to their utter confuſion. (*Pſ.* xiix. 14.)

28 And I will give him the morning ſtar.

28 And I will give him all the light and grace, comforts and enjoyments, that are to be found in me, who am, for excellence and delight, *the bright and morning Star*, (chap. xxii. 16.) and the Sun of Righteouſneſs, who hath aroſe with healing in my wings; (*Malac.* iv. 2.) and he, enlightened with my glory, *ſhall ſhine as the brightneſs of the firmament, and as the ſtars for ever and ever.* (Dan. xii. 3.)

29 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit ſaith unto the churches.

29 Let every one that is deſirous to know his ſin and danger, and the ground of his hope, carefully attend unto, and reflect upon what the Spirit of prophecy ſays, in a way of promiſe, as well as of threatning, not only to this church, but to all the churches of this day, and to the end of the world, whoſe

case is, or ever may be like theirs. (See the note on *ver.* 7.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How imperfect as to purity and prosperity are the churches of Christ on earth! Though there are many excellent things found in them, there are others to be blamed, as in all these churches, except that of *Smyrna*, which was infested with satanical enemies, and, doubtless, had its sins of infirmities, though the love of Christ cast a mantle over them. How critical, penetrating, and truly divine, is the knowledge that Christ has of all his churches! His eyes are like a flame of fire, and he searches the secrets of all their hearts. How kind and condescending is the notice he takes of all their graces, services, and sufferings for his sake! of their hating what he hates; of their opposition to sin and error; and of every good thing that is found in them! He admonishes them not to be afraid of the worst, and to hold fast what they have of the best, that belongs to their profession of his name. He dwells in the midst of them, and holds their ministers, as stars in his right hand: He is the beginner and perfecter of all that concerns them; and as he died, so he ever lives for them. How compassionately does he remind them of their falls, and of the declensions of their first love and zeal, and call them to repentance and reformation! But how awful are his threatnings, in case of their persisting in any corrupt principles or practices, relating to doctrine, worship, or manners, like idolatry and fornication! He will surely ere long fight against them, as with the sword of his mouth, and unchurch them. And, alas! how tremendous will the executions of his wrath be upon impostors and hypocritical professors, and upon all his malicious and obstinate enemies! Whatever their boasts of deep understanding be, they act under the powerful and crafty influence of the devil, and do his work, in seducing the unwary, and in persecuting the faithful servants of Christ. He, whose feet are like burning and shining brass, will trample them in his righteous anger, till he bring them and their adherents to utter destruction. But O how encouraging and animating are his promises to his people that war a good warfare, in his name and strength, against all his and their spiritual enemies, unto victory over them! He will give them all refreshments and delights, in partaking of his fruits, as the hidden manna, and tree of life in the heavenly paradise; will secure them from all the miseries of the second death; will put a crown of immortal glory on their heads; and will give them the noblest pleasure, which they themselves only can be conscious of, as being like the new name, and white stone, which no man knows but he that has it; and which, at length, shall shine in all the lustre derived from him, who is the bright and Morning Star. May every one, that is concerned about his own salvation, seriously consider all these awful and comfortable things, with a reference to himself, as far as they are applicable to his own case, that he may not be confounded; but may have boldness in the day of judgment, when Christ will render to every one according to the kind and degree of his works.

CHAP. III.

Here follow three other epistles, containing warnings and threatnings, exhortations, encouragements, and promises, suitable to the state of the church at Sardis, 1,—6. *at* Philadelphia, 7,—13. *and at* Laodicea, 14,—22.

TEXT.

AND unto the angel of the church in Sardis, write, These things saith he that hath the seven Spirits of God,

PARAPHRASE.

THE *fifth* epistle, which Christ ordered me to write in his name, is directed to the pastor of the church at *Sardis*, another city of *Asia*, for their use. The things contained herein are the immediate dictates of that divine person, who, as Mediator, has an

God, and the seven stars; I know thy works, that thou hast a name that thou livest, and art dead.

an all-fulness of the gifts and graces of the Holy Spirit, with authority to distribute them in their utmost perfection and variety, (*chap.* i. 4. see the paraphrase there) and who holds his ministring servants like stars in his right hand, under his direction, dispofal, care, and government: (*chap.* i. 16.) He says to you in particular, which is likewise applicable to all others of your state and character, I perfectly see through all the specious appearances of your external behaviour and forms of religion, as though you were alive to God and spiritual things, which gives you a reputation for saints among men; and, at the same time, I know that too many of you are still dead in trespasses and sins; * and that others of you are grown very dead, dull, and lifeless in the frame of your hearts, and manner of performing religious duties, especially when you are alone, and no eye of man is upon you.

2 Be watchful, and strengthen the things which remain, that are ready to die: for I have not found thy works perfect before God.

2 Take heed of such a stupid temper: Watch carefully against it, and make use of all means of grace, in humble dependence on me, who have the seven spirits, (*ver.* 1.) to render them effectual, that you may derive light and influence from me for adding strength and vigour to the small remains of those good things, that are in some of you; but are so weak and languishing, as to be on the very point of expiring, unless revived by fresh recruits: For, by the search which I have made into your hearts and ways, I find such woful defects in your performances, as render them unfit to be acceptable in the sight of God.

3 Remember therefore how thou hast received and heard, and hold fast, and repent. If therefore thou shalt not watch, I will come on thee as a thief, and thou shalt not know what hour I will come upon thee.

3 As ever therefore you would make a right judgment of your state, call to mind, and seriously reflect upon the doctrine of my gospel, and the manner in which you at first received it, and heard the preaching of it; whether it were in faith and love, whereby it was rooted in your hearts, or were only with some sudden impression and flights of affection, which soon wore off again: And so far as it was according to the truth of the gospel, and was entertained with a sincere faith, do not give it up, but keep it with the utmost care in your religious regard and conformity to it; but so far as it was only in a notional and superficial manner, or as you have lost much of the life and

NOTE.

* It appears from *ver.* 4. that there were some sincere and eminent believers in this church, though the greater part of them were not what they appeared to be; but were either inwardly decaying, as to vital religion; or utterly destitute of the grace of God, while *having a form of godliness*, they *denied the power of it*, like those whom the apostle speaks of, 2 *Tim.* iii. 5. The paraphrase points to persons of both these characters.

and power with which you at first received it, be deeply humbled before God in penitential reflections upon it, and rest not satisfied till those defects be rectified: For if you continue careless and unconcerned about these things, which so nearly affect your salvation, and do not awake out of your lethargic temper to watch against it, I will certainly break in upon you with my terrors, in the way of my judgments, as suddenly and unexpectedly, and with as much surprize to your loss and damage, as a thief doth into a house, at a time when the master least of all thinks of it. (*Matth.* xxiv. 42,—44. and 1 *Thess.* v. 2, 3.)

4 Thou hast a few names even in Sardis, which have not defiled their garments; and they shall walk with me in white: for they are worthy.

4 There are indeed a few persons of eminence, which are known to me as by name, even in the church at *Sardis*, (corrupt and degenerate as it is) who have not contracted the defilements of error and immorality, that have spread all around them, but have maintained their integrity, as found in the faith, and holy in their lives: And be it known to them for their comfort, that they shall still be kept close to me, and live in holy and delightful communion with me, * and shall be advanced to the highest honours: For they are graciously accepted, as worthy through my righteousness, and are fit and meet by the sanctifying influences of my Spirit, (*Col.* i. 12.) to be admitted to all the privileges and favours, that I will confer upon them, even unto eternal life.

5 He that overcometh, the same shall be clothed in white raiment; and I will not blot out his name out of the book of life, but I will confess his name before my Father, and before his angels.

5 Whoever he be that overcomes all temptations, especially in a dissolute and apostatizing age like this, shall shine in splendid robes of righteousness, light, and glory, that are *washed and made white in the blood of the lamb;* (chap. vii. 14.) and I will be so far from striking him out (according to what he may sometimes fear) from the register of eternal life, in which his name is, as it were enrolled as a citizen, and heir of heaven, among the chosen of God before all worlds, that I will publicly own him for mine, whom the Father has given me, and I have redeemed by my own blood, and who has, under the influence of my grace, bravely confessed me before men, in the worst of times; and I will shew my approbation of him in the presence of my heavenly Father and of his holy angels, when I shall come in all my glory to the judgment of the great day. (*Matth.* x. 32. and *Luke* xii. 8.)

6 He that hath an ear, let him hear

6 He that is desirous to know the state of his own soul before God, let him impartially consider, and compare

NOTE.

* *White* may be an allusion to the *white robes* which the priests used to wear, in token of their acceptance and sanctity, when they ministered before the Lord; or to the white robes of princes and conquerors, in token of their high honour and joyful triumph.

hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

pare himself with what the holy Spirit of prophecy herein speaks to all the churches, which are, or ever may be in circumstances like this of *Sardis*, (see the note on *chap.* i. 9.) that he may see what part of it belongs, peculiarly to himself, and be suitably affected with it.

7 And to the angel of the church in Philadelphia, write, These things saith he that is holy, he that is true, he that hath the key of David, he that openeth, and no man shutteth; and shutteth, and no man openeth:

7 And the *sixth* epistle which Christ commanded me to write, as from him, is inscribed to the pastor of the church at *Philadelphia* another *Asiatic* city, for their immediate use, and for the instruction of all others, whose case may be like theirs, He, who says the things contained herein, is essentially and infinitely holy in his divine nature, unspottedly holy in his human nature, communicatively holy in his office, and perfectly holy in all his dispensations; and is invariably truth in himself, infallibly true in his declarations, threatnings and promises, and is the truth or substance of all types and prophecies relating to him; who also has the government of the church, and the world upon his shoulders, as the Son of *David*, who succeeds, in a spiritual sense, to the throne and dominion of his house and kingdom, (*Isa.* xxii. 22.) and has the power of life and death, and of heaven and hell, the doors of which he authoritatively and effectually opens; and when he does so, (ϑεὸς) no creature in heaven, earth, or hell, can possibly shut them; and when he shuts them against those that would be glad to go to heaven, or shuts them upon those that are forced to go to hell, none can open them either to let them into heaven, or to deliver them out of hell.

8 I know thy works: behold, I have set before thee an open door, and no man can shut it: for thou hast a little strength, and hast kept my word, and hast not denied my name.

8 I am perfectly apprised, and approve of the true nature, tendency, and design, and of the principles and manner of your religious services. Behold, with humble admiration and praise, I have opened to you a door of opportunity for my word to have free course and be glorified; (2 *Thess.* iii. 1.) and none of its enemies, (ϑεὸς) whether men or devils, shall be permitted to have power to defeat it; because, though you are not so eminent for light, grace, and holiness, nor so proficient therein answerable to your advantages, as some other first-rate Christians are; yet I kindly observe, that you have some small degree of these excellent attainments, in sincerity and truth; and have faithfully maintained the doctrines of my gospel, together with my institutions and commands; and have not renounced your holy profession of my name, as your only Lord and Saviour, notwithstanding all the temptations you have been under so to do.

9 Behold, I will make them of the syna-

9 Take notice farther, for your comfort and encouragement, that I will give you victory over them, who

synagogue of Satan (which say they are Jews, and are not, but do lie) behold, I will make them to come and worship before thy feet, and to know that I have loved thee.

who serve Satan's interests as a company of his devoted servants, that live and act under his influence, and at the same time profess themselves to be *Jewish Christians*, but are evidently proved by their principles and practices, to be false pretenders to that character: Observe, I say, that I will constrain them to come before you with confessions of their errors, and to sit down at your feet, like humble disciples, to receive your instructions, and prostrate themselves in your presence, though not with religious homage of you, yet to pay it to me, as your Lord and Saviour; and they shall be forced to acknowledge, that I have a peculiar favour for you, as the objects of my special love.

10 Because thou hast kept the word of my patience, I also will keep thee from the hour of temptation, which shall come upon all the world, to try them that dwell upon the earth.

10 Since, in obedience to my command, you have hitherto patiently endured persecutions for my sake, and in conformity to my patience in sufferings, and have preserved your integrity in faithfully adhering to the pure doctrine of the gospel, which is continued, in my great long-suffering and patience, to a sinful world, and teaches patience under all tribulations, I assure you, for your further encouragement, that I also, on my part, will certainly preserve you from apostacy in the still more trying days of yet sorer troubles and afflictions, which, by divine permission, will come, not upon you only, but upon all the professors of my name throughout the *Roman* empire, * for their trial who dwell therein, that the approved may be made manifest, and openly distinguished from others who will turn apostates.

11 Behold, I come quickly: hold that fast which thou hast, that no man take thy crown.

11 To support you under these melancholy prospects, behold, with attention, admiration, and joy, it shall not be long before I will come, like one in haste, to deliver my church and people from all their enemies. In the faith and hope of this, and in an humble dependence on my promised grace to keep you in the hour of temptation, (*ver.* 10.) hold fast with the utmost care and constancy, zeal and holy resolution, the doctrine you have received, the work of God wrought in you, and done by you, and your faithful profession of my name, that none (μηδεὶς) through subtilty or violence, may ever pervert you, and so rob you of this honour, much less of the crown of life, which I have promised to them who are faithful unto death; (*chap.* ii. 10.) and that none may outshine you in any thing truly excellent.

12 Whosoever

NOTE.

* The *Roman empire* was often called *the world*, because it extended to the greatest part of the known world; and the persecution here foretold is probably thought to point at that under the emperor *Trajan*, which was more fierce and universal, than those which the Christians endured under *Nero* or *Domitian*.

12 Him that overcometh, will I make a pillar in the temple of my God, and he shall go no more out: and I will write upon him the name of my God, and the name of the city of my God, *which is* new Jerusalem, which cometh down out of heaven from my God: and *I will write upon him* my new name.

12 Whosoever he be that overcomes all temptations, I, as his head and Saviour, will fix him immoveably, like a pillar, in the church of my covenant-God and Father, triumphant for ever in heaven; and he, like the pillars, called *Jachin* and *Boaz*, in *Solomon*'s temple that were consecrated to God, (1 *Kings* vii. 15, 21.) shall never depart, or be removed from thence: And, to honour him with the highest dignity, I will inscribe upon him the name of *a son* of my covenant-God, and of *a citizen* of that blessed state, which he is the author of, and fills with his light and glory, even the *New Jerusalem*, which is so called in distinction from, and preference to the literal *Jerusalem* in the land of *Judea;* and which is of heavenly original, and shall be perfected in the beatific presence of my covenant-God. And I will inscribe my own name, which puts new honour upon him as a *Christian*, whom I have dignified with the adoption of sons, and made victorious under my banner.

13 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

13 He that is inclined to hear these rich encouragements to perseverance in faith and holiness, let him attentively consider what the Spirit of prophecy says, not only to this, but to all churches, whose characters answer to that at *Philadelphia*. (See the note on chap. ii. 7.)

14 And unto the angel of the church of the Laodiceans, write, These things saith the Amen, the faithful and true witness, the beginning of the creation of God;

14 And the *seventh* and *last* epistle, which I am commanded to write in Christ's name, is directed to the pastor of the church at *Laodicea*, another city of *Asia*, and is most immediately designed for their use, but not without an eye to other churches in their circumstances: The things contained herein are what he says, whose name is emphatically *the Amen*, as he is the faithful witness, (*chap.* i. 5.) and is truth itself, and infallibly true in the testimony he bears concerning all things whatsoever, and particularly those which are contained in the prophecies of this book; and he is able to perform them, as he is the Author, Prince, and Ruler of all the creatures in heaven, and on earth, that God has made by him. (*Heb.* i. 2.)

15 I know thy works, that thou art neither cold nor hot: I would thou wert cold or hot.

15 I, says he, am intimately acquainted with the nature and quality, principles, motives, and ends of all that you do in religion; whatever your own or others thoughts be about you, I know that you are neither absolutely unconcerned about it, on one hand, nor fervent in Spirit serving the Lord, on the other. I would rather that you should cast off a profession of my name, than disgrace it by being formal and hypocritical in it; or, which is best of all, that you were sincerely zealous in a behaviour correspondent to it.

16 So then because thou art lukewarm, and neither cold nor hot, I will spue thee out of my mouth:

16 But as you are very cool, careless, and indifferent about things of a spiritual, heavenly, and holy nature, and are neither professed neglecters of them, nor heartily affected toward them, the time is coming when, if you persist in this disagreeable indolence, I will cast you off with abhorrence, as a man nauseates and vomits up lukewarm water that offends his stomach. But, in order to your recovery and finding mercy, attend to the following counsel.

17 Because thou sayest, I am rich, and increased with goods, and have need of nothing; and knowest not that thou art wretched, and miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked.

17 Because you conceitedly and vainly delude yourself, saying, I am rich in spiritual gifts and graces, and have an abundance of all good things pertaining to life and godliness, and am in nothing defective; and because you are so stupidly blind to your own deplorable case, as not to understand and consider, that you really are forlorn, and miserable, and destitute of all true riches toward God, and ignorant of your danger, and of the way of deliverance, and are exposed to his just wrath and displeasure, like naked and deformed persons, that have no righteousness, either of justification or of sanctification, to cover you.

18 I counsel thee to buy of me gold tried in the fire, that thou mayest be rich; and white raiment, that thou mayest be clothed, and *that* the shame of thy nakedness do not appear; and anoint thine eyes with eyesalve, that thou mayest see.

18 I, as a compassionate friend to souls in such wretched self-deceiving circumstances, advise you humbly to apply to, and deal with me, which, in the language of traffic, may be called *buying of me*, as you must part with your sins, and vain conceits of self-wisdom and righteousness, for the treasures of my merit and grace, that you may receive them at free cost, *without money and without price;* (Isa. lv. 1.) it being impossible for souls, so miserably *poor*, (ver. 17.) to give any valuable consideration for these excellent things, which are much more precious than the finest gold after it has been purified by the fire: Your being partakers of these is of the highest importance, that you may be rich in faith and every other grace, and in good works, and may be endowed with all spiritual and durable riches as an heir of the kingdom of heaven: And as, in a spiritual sense, you are really *naked*, (ver. 17.) I counsel you to apply to me for the bright and spotless robe of my righteousness, * which, for purity and splendor, may be compared to *white raiment*, that you may be completely covered and beautifully adorned with

NOTE.

* As *gold tried in the fire* is a fit metaphor, to signify the refined graces of the Spirit, which enrich the soul; (1 *Pet.* i. 7.) so, to keep the ideas distinct, I rather chuse to understand *white raiment* to signify the *righteousness of Christ, which is unto, and upon all them that believe*, for justification, (*Rom.* iii. 22.) than the *inherent righteousness* of sanctification, which is much the same with the graces of the Spirit, that are *the inward adornings of the heart.* (1 Pet. iii. 4.)

with it, and your guilt and odiousness may not be exposed to the eye of incensed justice, unto your everlasting shame and confusion: And as you are exceeding *blind*, (ver. 17.) through pride, prejudices, and worldly affections, with respect to your spiritual concerns, your only way for a cure is to receive the knowledge of my word, under the illumination of my Spirit, which is like the most sovereign and effectual *eye-salve*, that your understanding may be enlightened, and you may be wise to salvation.

19 As many as I love, I rebuke and chasten: be zealous therefore, and repent.

19 While I give you this necessary, tender, and engaging advice in your deplorable circumstances, you may well conclude that your case, though dangerous, is not yet desperate, notwithstanding the solemn, close, and faithful rebukes I have given you: For whenever I see any thing amiss in the objects of my love, I warn and reprove them for their conviction, and bring them under the discipline of the rod for their instruction and reformation, that they may be partakers of my holiness. (*Heb.* xii. 6,—10.) As ever therefore you would reap the happy fruits of my rebukes and chastenings, and make a due improvement of them, you ought to be earnestly desirous of having your heart inspired with sacred love, and fervour in religion, and zeal for my glory; and to reflect with ingenuous shame and grief upon, and with full purpose of heart turn from, all your lukewarmness, and every other evil, that is so prevalent in you, and offensive to me.

20 Behold, I stand at the door, and knock: if any man hear my voice, and open the door, I will come in to him, and will sup with him, and he with me.

20 For your encouragement hereunto, take notice of my wonderful condescension and kindness, who, after all, still wait to be gracious, and continue standing, like an importunate lover and suitor, as it were, at the door of your heart, and knocking there by my word, providence, and Spirit, for admission into it: If any one shall attend to my repeated and endearing pleas with him, and by faith open to me, I will make entry into his soul with all my riches of righteousness, grace, and consolation; will take delight in all the good things found in him; and will entertain him with sensible manifestations and expressions of my love to him; and so will admit him to the sweetest communion, in which we shall have mutual fellowship here, and for ever hereafter, like that of the most intimate friends and affectionate relations, who chearfully feast together, in token of their reciprocal love.

21 To him that overcometh, will I grant to sit with me in my throne, even as I also overcame,

21 Whoever, by receiving me into his heart, shall overcome all corruptions within, and temptations from without, I will own and honour him as a brave conqueror, and will graciously advance him to the high dignity and happiness of sitting with me in

vercame, and am set down with my Father in his throne.

my throne of glory at the day of judgment, that he may concur with, and share in the benefit of, my final sentence upon all mankind; (see the paraphrase on 1 *Cor.* vi. 2.) even as I myself, in my office-capacity, have overcome the world, and all the powers of darkness; and am exalted in my human nature to the highest power and authority with my heavenly Father, at his right hand, on his throne of glory.

22 He that hath an ear, let him hear what the Spirit saith unto the churches.

22 He that is solicitous about salvation, and would not deceive his own soul, let him carefully attend to the solemn, awful, and threatning things, on one hand, and encouraging things, on the other, which the holy Spirit of prophecy herein speaks, not only to this, but to all the churches, according as they may be applicable to them respectively, in their several generations. (See the note on *chap.* ii. 7.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How different is the state of churches and professing Christians on earth! Some, like that of *Philadelphia*, are sincere, faithful, and thriving; and, though but of little strength, are highly approved of Christ, and honoured with peculiar tokens of his love; whilst others, like those of *Sardis* and *Laodicea*, are not what they profess to be; and come under his severest rebukes; some among them have only a name to live, while they are dead; others are under languishings of grace, as though it were ready to die; and others are of a lukewarm temper, and yet flatter themselves as if all things were right and well, and do not perceive that they are wretched, miserable, and poor, and blind, and naked. But O the important and affecting difference that Christ will make between them! He, who is the author of the creation, has an all-fulness of the Spirit, is divinely holy and true in himself, and in the execution of his office, and has the key of government to open or shut without controul. He opens an effectual door for his word to have free course and be glorified; and takes a favourable notice of the lowest degrees of spiritual strength in true believers, and of their stedfast adherence to the truths of the gospel, with patience under all tribulations for his sake: He will bring all the emissaries of Satan into subjection to them, will keep them in every hour of temptation, that they may persevere in the faith, profession, and holiness of the gospel, and hold fast what they have attained to, that none may deprive them of the honours of their crown; and he will soon come to own them in the presence of his Father and of the holy angels, and to fix their abodes in the heavenly *Jerusalem*, as citizens that have the name of their God and Saviour upon them, a most excellent name, answerable to the eternal record of their names in the book of life, which shall never be blotted out; and they shall be deemed worthy to shine in priestly and royal robes of light and glory, and shall sit with their head and Saviour on his heavenly throne.—But how dreadful is the case of formal and hypocritical, cool and indolent professors! Christ is fully acquainted with, and resents all the secret treachery and indifference of their hearts; and, unless cured by his grace, will cast them off with abhorrence, and come upon them to their terrible surprise, like a thief in the night, before they are aware: But, in the mean while, how astonishing and endearing are his patience, condescension, and mercy, even to such as these! He calls them to serious reflection and repentance; counsels them to come by faith to him, that he may enrich them with his precious gifts and graces; may adorn them with his glorious robe of righteousness; and may bring them out of darkness into marvellous light: His very rebukes and chastisements are designed and blessed for this purpose, to those whom he loves; and he graciously waits, in the ministrations of his word and motions of his Spirit, to gain admission into their hearts; and, to encourage their opening to him, promises that he will thereupon manifest his love to them, and hold delightful communion with them, which shall begin in this world,

world, and be perfected in heaven. May we severally consider how far, either these comfortable, or terrible things belong to us! And may the Holy Spirit, who speaks them in his word, speak them to saving purpose in our hearts!

CHAP. IV.

The apostle having finished the epistolary part of his revelation relating to the then present and near approaching state of the seven churches of Asia, *proceeds to open the prophetic scene, which was represented to him in another vision, relating to the more general affairs of the church for times to come, to the end of the world: And as he introduced the former with his vision of Christ,* (chap. i.) *he introduces this with his vision of God the Creator, as on his glorious throne, surrounded with a heavenly host, which he saw under the emblems of twenty-four elders, and four living creatures,* 1,—7. *and with their and the holy angels songs which he heard,* 8—11.

TEXT.

AFTER this I looked, and behold, a door *was* opened in heaven: and the first voice which I heard, *was* as it were of a trumpet talking with me; which said, Come up hither, and I will shew thee things which must be hereafter.

2 And immediately I was in the Spirit: and behold, a throne was set in heaven, and *one* sat on the throne.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER having been led into the foregoing vision, and received the directions, which I was ordered to send to the seven churches of *Asia*, I was favoured with another visionary representation of an opening into heaven, (see the note on *Acts* vii. 55, 56.) that I might observe what passed there. And the first voice, which was now directed to me from the Lord Jesus, as in the former vision, (*chap.* i. 10, 11.) was, for its solemnity, and loudness, like the sound of a trumpet, after the manner of that, which was heard at the delivering of the law on mount *Sinai*. This voice of Christ ordered me to draw near and come up to him, and said, I will reveal to you the operations of Providence, relating to my church and its enemies, which shall take place hereafter, in a regular succession of events, to the consummation of all things.

2 And presently thereupon I again, as before, (*chap.* i. 10.) fell into a holy rapture, or supernatural extacy, like those of the apostles *Peter* and *Paul*, (Acts x. 10, 11. and 2 Cor. xii. 2, 3. see the note there) under the immediate illumination and conduct of the Spirit of prophecy: And as the prophets *Isaiah*, *Ezekiel*, and *Daniel*, saw in their visions a representation of *the Lord*, as *sitting upon a throne, high and lifted up*; or saw *the likeness of a throne, as a fiery flame, on which the Ancient of Days sat*; (Isa. vi. 1. Ezek. x. 1. and Dan. vii. 9.) so the prophetic vision clearly exhibited to my sight a majestic, awful, and glorious throne, established and exalted in heaven; and I saw an emblem of the Creator and Governor of the world, (*ver.* 11.) as seated with august majesty

majeſty and grandeur, not in human form, but in an illuſtrious ſymbolical appearance upon his imperial throne, *whoſe kingdom rules over all.* (Pſ. ciii. 19.)

3 And he that ſat, was to look upon like a jaſper, and a ſardine ſtone: and *there was* a rainbow round about the throne, in ſight like unto an emerald.

3 And he who appeared in this emblem, as ſitting upon the throne, ſhined with a viſible radiant luſtre, like that of ſparkling precious ſtones, ſuch as the moſt brilliant of thoſe which were in the high prieſt's breaſt-plate, (*Ex.* xxviii. 17,—20.) and are repreſented as placed in the foundation of the *New Jeruſalem;* (Rev. xxi. 19, 20.) as particularly, his glorious appearance was like the ſplendid tranſparent colour of the jaſper, which, being of a glittering white, with an intermixture of beautiful colours, may be conſidered as a ſymbol of God's purity, together with various other perfections that are diſplayed in all his diſpenſations, and of his gracious regard to his people: The appearance was alſo like the blood-colour of the ſardine ſtone, which may be conſidered as an emblem of God's juſtice and fiery indignation againſt his enemies *: And there was a further repreſentation of a reſplendent *rainbow*, like a glorious arch over the throne, enlivened with a moſt beautiful green, like that of the emerald, to be the token of God's unchangeable faithfulneſs to his covenant of grace and peace, according to his own declaration of his deſign, in giving that emblem of his mercy, not to drown all the earth any more. (*Gen.* ix. 13, *&c.*) The whole appearance was inexpreſſibly majeſtic, awful, grand, and glorious.

4 And round about the throne *were*

4 And round about this imperial throne, I ſaw the appearance of four and twenty leſſer thrones, † on which

NOTES.

* If any thing *emblematical* be intended by the *colours* of theſe ſtones, (as is moſt generally thought, and for ought I know there may) the hints given in the paraphraſe appear as likely to me as any others, to anſwer that intention. But we may be more certain that the *rainbow* is a ſymbol of God's faithfulneſs in keeping covenant; becauſe he himſelf ſaid, that he *ſet his bow in the cloud to be the token of his covenant, and of his remembring it.* (Gen. ix. 13,—17.) And the tranſcendent luſtre of this bow may intimate its relation to a ſtill more excellent covenant.

† It is exceeding difficult to aſſign the true reaſon of theſe *elders* being repreſented as *twenty four.* Among the many conjectures I have met with, or can think of, the moſt probable may be, either that there is an alluſion to the twenty four courſes of the prieſts, which repreſented the church of *Iſrael;* or an alluſion to the heads or chiefs of the twelve tribes of *Iſrael*, which were their repreſentatives, (*Numb.* i. 4, 5, *&c.*) and the number of which may here be *doubled* to ſignify the great increaſe of the church, as conſiſting of *Jews* and *Gentiles*, under the goſpel-ſtate, or that the *Jewiſh* and Chriſtian churches are now united into one; or the alluſion may poſſibly be to a perfect aſſembly or conſiſtory of four and twenty elders as repreſentatives of the people.—But whether we take either of theſe, or any other way of judging in ſo dubious a caſe, it ſeems to me that theſe *four and twenty elders* are to be conſidered as repreſentatives of the *whole body of the church*, rather than (as ſome have thought) of its *miniſters* or *paſtors*, which I ſuppoſe are repreſented by *the four beaſts* or *living creatures.* (ver. 6. ſee the note there.) For it does not appear

were four and twenty seats: and upon the seats I saw four and twenty elders sitting, clothed in white raiment; and they had on their heads crowns of gold.

which there sat four and twenty elders, as representatives of the whole church of the Old and New Testament. These appeared as clothed with pure and illustrious robes, becoming their dignity, as emblematical both of the spotless righteousness of justification, and of sanctification, and of their being a *royal priesthood*, (1 Pet. ii. 9.) or *kings*, as well as *priests* to their God, (*Rev.* i. 6. and v. 10.) that hold their dignities under him, and pay homage to him; and they accordingly appeared round his throne with crowns of life and glory, like those of the most precious massy gold, upon their heads, agreeable to Christ's promise to them that are *faithful unto death*. (Chap. ii. 10.).

5 And out of the throne proceeded lightnings, and thunderings, and voices. And *there were* seven lamps of fire burning before the throne, which are the seven Spirits of God.

5 And I saw and heard the most awful and terrible flashes of lightning, attended with loud cracks and rumblings of thunder, and solemn voices proceeding from the imperial throne, like what was seen and heard at the promulgation of the law on mount *Sinai*, in token of the presence of the Lord there, and of his dreadful wrath against the transgressors of that law: (*Exod.* xix. 16,—18.) And as seven lamps were continually burning before the Lord in the tabernacle, (*Lev.* xxiv. 2,—4.) I saw an appearance before the throne of seven lighted lamps burning in full strength and lustre, as emblems of the variety and perfection of the gifts and graces of the Spirit of God, which he distributes for enlightning, purifying, and warming the souls of his ministers and churches, by *dividing to every one severally as he will.* (1 Cor. xii. 11. see the paraphrase on *chap.* i. 4.)

6 And before the throne *there was* a sea of glass like unto crystal. And in the midst of the throne, and round about the throne, *were* four beasts full of eyes before and behind.

6 And before the throne, answerable to the laver or great vessel of brass in the tabernacle and temple, which for its largeness was called the *molten sea*, (Ex. xxx. 18, 19. and 1 Kings vii. 23.) for the priests to wash in, when they went into the sanctuary of the Lord, I saw a bright and shining sea of glass, pure and spotless, as clear as crystal; which may be considered as a fit emblem of the *blood of Christ, which cleanses*

NOTE.

pear very probable, that the representatives of the *whole body of the church* should be only *four*, while those of *the ministers* are *four and twenty:* And these elders being represented as *sitting on thrones*, (θρονους) as the word rendered *seats* properly signifies, and their appearing with *crowns* on their heads, (*ver.* 4.) is agreeable to the common character of true believers, who are spoken of in scripture, and particularly in this prophetic book, (*chap.* i. 6. and ii. 10. and iii. 21.) as *kings*, and as sitting on *thrones*, and *crowned* as conquerors; and they are called *ancients* or *elders*. (Isa. xxiv. 23.) And, possibly, there may be some allusion to the *Roman* emperor, who sat as sovereign upon the imperial throne, and had kings of several provinces under him, who derived all their honours from him in a dependence on him, as in an infinitely higher sense the church does theirs, in an entire dependence upon the great God, who is the absolute and supreme Lord over all.

cleanses from all sin, and in which all true worshippers must be washed from their iniquities. And near the imperial throne, and in the midst of its circuit, as surrounded with the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, (*ver.* 4.) * I beheld the form of four living creatures, as representatives of the ministers of the gospel, and placed between God and them; and to intimate their being sufficiently qualified,

NOTE.

* The *four living creatures*, as the word (ζῶα) signifies, ought to be so rendered, as in *Ezek.* i. 5. rather than *beasts*, which cannot agree to the *third* and *fourth* of them, one of which had *a face as a man*, and the other was *like a flying eagle*. (ver. 7.) The learned Mr. *Joseph Mede*, Mr. *Whiston*, and Sir *Isaac Newton*, with others, suppose that these *four living creatures* are a representation of the *whole body of the church*, or of *private Christians*, in allusion to the whole army or body of the *Israelites* encamping with their standards, that bore the figures of *a lion, an ox, a man* and *an eagle* about the tabernacle in the wilderness. But Mr *Lowman* has well observed that, as there is no hint in Scripture, or any ancient writers, of such standards in the camp of *Israel*; so there is no evidence of it to be depended upon from later *Jewish* writings; and that it is very unlikely that *Moses* should make any such images, lest *Israel* should be tempted to idolatry, for which they had so lately suffered, and to which they were so very prone. (Vid. also to the same purpose, *Wits.* Ægyptiaca, pag. 162, 163.) He therefore supposes, with some others, that the allusion is more probably to the *Seraphim* and *Cherubim* in *Isaiah*'s and *Ezekiel*'s visions, *Isa.* vi. 1, 2. and *Ezek.* chap. x.; and that these four living creatures were representatives of the *holy angels*. (See his note on this verse.)—But it may be matter of some doubt, whether the *Seraphim* and *Cherubim*, which were emblems of some intelligent agents, were representatives of *angels*; or, on supposition of their being so, whether it were any further, than as angels are emblematical of *ministers*, or of some eminent *instruments of Providence*: For, in the prophetic visions of this book, *angels* are spoken of as pouring out *the seven vials* of judgments, which were to be executed by *men*. However, such things are said of these *four living creatures*, as forbid my understanding them to be the representatives of the *holy angels*: For both *they* and *the twenty-four elders* are brought in as *falling down before the Lamb with golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of saints*; and as joining with the elders, who led their worship in a song of praise to *him that sat upon the throne*; (ver. 9, 10) and to *the Lamb*, saying, *Thou wast slain and hast redeemed US to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation; and hast made* US *unto our God kings and priests; and* WE *shall reign on the earth*, (chap. v. 8,—10.) which surely *the angels* cannot say, concerning themselves. And then, in the very next verses, 11,—13 and *chap.* vii. 11, 12. *the angels* are *distinguished* from the *living creatures and the elders*, and are spoken of as joining with them in other songs of praise, to God and the Lamb, for things in which they were all one way or other concerned. And therefore, even admitting that here is an allusion to *Isaiah*'s and *Ezekiel*'s *Seraphim* and *Cherubim*, (though it be with some difference, as *every one* of the *Cherubim* had *four faces*) I nevertheless rather incline, with other expositors, to understand the *four living creatures*, as representatives of *the ministers of the gospel*, who are sent to preach it in the four corners of the earth, in distinction from the *body of the church*, or *private Christians*, which seem to be represented by the *four and twenty elders*: (see the note on *ver.* 4) For if the *Cherubim* were representatives of *angels* in some view of them; yet the *ministers* or *pastors* of churches had been called *angels*, Rev. i. 20. and chap. ii. iii.; and, as far as I find, all that is said in this book of prophecy, about the *four living creatures*, is fairly applicable to *ministers*: And this naturally accounts for the honour of their being here represented as nearer the throne than the twenty-four elders; since they, by their office, stand between God and the people in their holy ministrations.

ed, though few in number, for the discharge of their office, they were represented as having abundance of eyes, some in their fore-part, looking toward the throne, to receive and observe divine orders and influences from thence; and others in their hinder part, looking with tender and watchful care over the state and circumstances of the church, to *feed them with knowledge and understanding, as pastors after God's own heart.* (Jer. iii. 15.)

7 And the first beast *was* like a lion, and the second beast like a calf, and the third beast had a face as a man, and the fourth beast *was* like a flying eagle.

7 And the *first* of these living creatures, which I saw, was represented with a face like *a lion*, to signify undaunted boldness and courage; and the *second* living creature's face was like that of *a calf* or *ox*, (Ezek. i. 10.) to signify patience and fitness for labour in the work of the Lord; and the *third* living creature appeared with a face of *human form*, to signify wisdom, prudence, and compassion; and the *fourth* living creature had an appearance like the face of an *eagle*, which has a piercing eye, soars aloft, and is swift in flight, to signify penetration of mind into the great mysteries of the gospel, and sublime sentiments and devotion, together with eminent zeal, activity, and vigour in the service of God.

8 And the four beasts had each of them six wings about him, and *they were* full of eyes within: and they rest not day and night, saying, Holy, holy, holy, Lord God Almighty, which was, and is, and is to come.

8 And every one of these living creatures was represented, as with a furniture of six wings round about him, as the *seraphim* were in *Isaiah*'s vision. (*Chap.* vi. 2.) The use of which is there said to be, to cover his *face* with two of them, in token of humility and reverence; to cover his *feet* with two others, in token of readiness and diligence for executing divine commissions; and with the other two *he flew*, to intimate his alacrity and expedition therein: And they all appeared in my vision as full of eyes, turning inward to look well to their own hearts, and attend to the illuminations of God's word and Spirit for directing them in the discharge of their office: And they, like the *seraphim* that appeared to *Isaiah*, (chap. vi. 3.) are continually employed in their holy ministrations, and in solemn adorations, saying, with the profoundest reverence and sacred wonder, in a three-fold acclamation and ascription of glory to the Father, Son, and Spirit, as three persons but one God, *Holy, holy, holy*, unspottedly, infinitely, essentially, and communicatively holy, is the Lord Jehovah, the Almighty God, who from everlasting to everlasting always was, is, and will be unchangeably the same; and is the Creator, Preserver, Governor, and Disposer of all things, as their first cause and ultimate end; they all being *of him, through him, and to him, to whom be glory for ever, Amen.* (Rom. xi. 36.)

9 And when those beasts give glory, and honour, and thanks to him that sat on the throne, who liveth for ever and ever,

9 And when these living creatures, the representatives of Christ's ministring servants, are thus engaged in solemn ascriptions of the highest glory, and of all divine honours and thankful acknowledgments to the great God, who, as personated by the Father, (see the note on *chap.* i. 4.) appeared in emblems of awful and illustrious majesty, as seated on the imperial throne; (*ver.* 2, 3.) and is the immortal, the only and ever living and true God;

10 The four and twenty elders fall down before him that sat on the throne, and worship him that liveth for ever and ever, and cast their crowns before the throne, saying,

11 Thou art worthy, O Lord, to receive glory, and honour, and power: for thou hast created all things, and for thy pleasure they are, and were created.

10, 11 The four and twenty elders, the representatives of the church, joining in chearful concert with their ministers who led the song, (*ver.* 9.) bowed down in low prostration, and with humble adoration, before their Maker, who was represented as sitting on the throne, and paid their solemn homage in worshipping him, who only has immortality, without beginning of days, or end of years; and, taking off their glorious crowns from their heads, they laid them down at the foot of the throne, as deeply sensible of their own utter unworthiness to wear such royal honours in his presence, and of their receiving and holding them merely by his free favour: In humble acknowledgment of which they said, Thou, O Lord, and thou alone, art infinitely worthy, that the most exalted ascriptions of glory, and honour, and power should be paid to thee: For thou art the great Creator of all things in heaven and earth; and it is by thy sovereign effective will and pleasure, and for thine own glory, who hast *made all things for thyself*, (Prov. xvi. 4.) that they still subsist, and are wisely disposed of, as seems good in thy sight, as well as that they at first were brought forth out of nothing into being, by the almighty word of thy sovereign command.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How delightful is the thought that a door of access is opened into heaven itself, through the blood of the Redeemer, to all that are washed in it! They may enter by faith, under the Spirit's guidance and influence, into that holy place while they are here, till they shall be admitted to immediate vision hereafter. With what awful majesty and grandeur, covenant faithfulness to his people, and terror to his enemies, together with all adorable excellencies, doth the great God appear, as on his high imperial throne! And how surprising are the honours of celestial thrones and crowns, which his servants and people shall be advanced to in his blissful presence, as surrounding his throne of glory, and paying their solemn homage to him with the profoundest reverence! How courageous, diligent, and laborious, prudent, vigilant, active, and chearfully expeditious should the servants of Christ be in executing their commission, under the illumination and assistance of his Spirit, in all the variety of gifts and graces that he distributes to them! With what humble adoration, and disclaims of merit, should believers appear before the throne of God, as casting their crowns and prostrating themselves at his feet, and ascribing the highest honour, glory, blessing, and power, to the sacred Three in One, as all things were created, and are preserved and governed by, and for him, that he may be glorified for ever and ever! And what instructive emblems are all these, of what the

the ministers and churches of Christ ought to be, and do on earth, till they get to heaven, and join the general assembly and church of the first born in their eternal hallelujahs!

CHAP. V.

In a following part of the apostle's vision, he saw in the right hand of God a book of divine decrees, which was sealed with seven seals for secrecy, and could be opened by none but Christ, 1,—5. *He, appearing under the emblem of a Lamb in the midst of the throne, took the book to open it,* 6, 7. *Upon which the four living creatures and four and twenty elders ascribe all honour to him for undertaking this difficult work, and for redeeming them to God by his blood, and making them kings and priests to him,* 8,—10. *And an innumerable company of angels join with them in another song of praise to God and the Lamb,* 11,—14.

TEXT.

AND I saw in the right hand of him that sat on the throne, a book written within and on the backside, sealed with seven seals.

PARAPHRASE.

AND I further saw in my vision of God, who sat on the imperial throne, the appearance of a book or roll, which, methought, he held, as it were, in his right hand, to intimate that he would maintain and execute its contents. This book was full of written records, as I afterwards understood, relating to such important events, concerning the church and the *Roman* empire, and even the whole world, as God had determined to bring to pass in their order; and it was sealed with seven seals, * according to the seven principal parts contained in it, one on the outside of each to prevent its being looked into and read, till they in their order should be opened; (*Isa.* xxix. 11.) thereby intimating that God's purposes, which are as certainly recorded in his own eternal mind, as if they

NOTE.

* *The most common books* of the ancients were not like ours, that consist of many leaves bound together; but were *volumes*, or long pieces of parchment, that were rolled upon a round stick, in like manner as silks or stuffs often are in our days This book of prophecy, which, according to our translation, was *written within and on the backside*, might, by a little alteration of the pointing be read, *written within, and sealed on the backside*, or *without*, (ἔξωθεν) as *Steven*'s and several other copies read it. (Vid. *Grot.* and *Mill.* in loc.) And, according to *Grotius*, the words *sealed with seven seals* are a *prolepsis*; and are to be understood, not as though the apostle saw them all on the outside; but there were seven volumes wrapt up one within another, each of which was sealed; so that, upon opening and unrolling the first, the second appeared to be sealed up, till that was opened, and so on to the *seventh* —And this seems to be countenanced by the opening of the seals, one after another, in the next chapter: For in case all the seven seals had been on the outside, none of the volumes could have been read till all the seals were loosed; whereas, upon opening of every seal, the next came in course to be opened too. And *Pareus*, after others, conceived that though this book was only visional; yet it is to be understood as the emblem of *this book of Revelation* itself, in which Christ was pleased to reveal such things to *John*, as he afterwards committed to writing for the use of the church.

they had been wrote down in a book, are as much concealed from the knowledge of all creatures till God shall please to reveal them, as the writing of any book can be, that is closely sealed up with ever so many seals to keep it secure and secret till it is opened.

2 And I saw a strong angel proclaiming with a loud voice, Who is worthy to open the book, and to loose the seals thereof?

2 And I saw a mighty angel, standing forth and crying out with a strong and earnest voice, in a way of proclamation and challenge to the whole creation, Is there any one of you all that is sufficiently qualified, or has worth and dignity enough to unfold the contents of this book, and break open the seals that are set upon it, so as to be able to understand and make known the secret purposes of God with respect to his dispensations, which are to be fulfilled in their proper time and course?

3 And no man in heaven, nor in earth, neither under the earth, was able to open the book, neither to look thereon.

3 And none (οὐδεὶς) in the whole compass of created beings, no angel in heaven, nor any creature living upon earth, nor any departed spirit of the most famous patriarchs, prophets, or apostles, whose bodies are laid under the earth, was capable, or deemed fit and worthy of the honour of penetrating into the secrets of God's counsels, or of so much as looking into them to discern any thing of them, as was signified by there being no one found among them all that could open this sealed book, or look into a single line of it; but they all stood silent and aghast, as being conscious to themselves of utter insufficiency for it.

4 And I wept much, because no man was found worthy to open, and to read the book, neither to look thereon.

4 And as I apprehended that things of vast consequence were included in this book of divine decrees, relating to future events, which I hoped and earnestly desired might by some means or other be revealed to me, I was exceedingly grieved and burst out into floods of tears; because, in answer to this universal summons, no creature could be found equal to this arduous task of discovering the secret designs of Providence, relating to the church in this world, till it shall be glorified in a better; as was signified by there being none in the whole creation that could loosen the seals, and read this emblematical book, or get the least insight into its records, that he might reveal them.

5 And one of the elders saith unto me, Weep not: behold the Lion of the tribe of Juda, the root of David, hath prevailed to open the book, and to loose the seven seals thereof.

5 And while my spirit was thus troubled within me, one of the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, spake seasonably and comfortably to me, saying, Refrain your eyes from tears on account of there being no mere creature that can unfold these secrets; behold! there is a divine person, the only true Messiah, who, according to ancient prophecies of him, as the victorious prince of the tribe of *Judah*, is, for strength and eminence, like a *lion*, to maintain and defend his property, and tear his enemies to pieces;

pieces; (*Gen.* xlix. 9, 10.) and is not only sprung in his human nature from that tribe, as a descendent of *Jesse*, the father of *David;* but in his divine nature and office-character, is the root or source of all the happiness and glory of his kingdom, which was typified by that of *David;* (Isa. xi. 1, 10.) this almighty conqueror has overcome all obstructions, (νικησε) and obtained the honour, by the merit of his death, to disclose the divine counsels, the emblem of which is his opening the book, and taking off its seven seals, that the things contained therein might no longer remain absolute secrets, but be gradually made manifest in a regular succession of providences to explain them.

6 And I beheld, and lo, in the midst of the throne, and of the four beasts, and in the midst of the elders, stood a Lamb as it had been slain, having seven horns, and seven eyes, which are the seven Spirits of God, sent forth into all the earth.

6 Hereupon I looked to see this wonderful person; and, behold! to my immediate relief and transporting joy, I had a vision of the Lord Jesus Christ, in the glory of his mediatorial exaltation in human nature, at the Father's right hand, as standing near the throne, and within the circle of the four living creatures, and of the four and twenty elders, to mediate between God and them; I saw him in this posture of readiness and ability to execute all his offices of a prophet, priest, and king, which were represented under proper emblems of them severally. His *priestly* office was represented by his appearing with evident characters of *the Lamb of God*, who had been slain, as a propitiatory sacrifice to *take away the sin of the world*, when *through the eternal Spirit he offered himself without spot unto God;* (John i. 29. and Heb. ix. 14.) and who intercedes before the throne in virtue of his atoning blood: His *kingly* office was represented by the emblem of his having *seven horns*, a number of perfection, to denote his almighty power to execute the will of God's purpose to protect, support, and defend his church, and push down all his and their enemies: And his *prophetic* office was represented by the emblem of his having *seven eyes*, to denote that *all the treasures of wisdom and knowledge are in him*, (Col. ii. 3.) that he has a thorough foresight of all events, and an unmeasurable fulness of the Spirit of wisdom and revelation, whose gifts and graces are under his direction, to be issued forth, in all their variety and excellence, for the benefit of his ministers and people, wherever they are scattered through the whole earth.

7 And he came and took the book out of the right hand of him that sat upon the throne.

7 And, as I further saw in my vision, the Lord Jesus came close up to the throne, and received the book out of the right hand of the Father, who sat upon it, and gave the book to him, as a signal of his delivering all power in heaven and earth to him; as his *receiving* it also was, of his being both able and willing

willing to open the meaning of the things contained therein, and to take care that they ſhould be effectually accompliſhed in their proper time and order, according to the divine purpoſe about them.

8 And when he had taken the book, the four beaſts, and four *and* twenty elders fell down before the Lamb, having every one of them harps, and golden vials full of odours, which are the prayers of ſaints.

8 And when he had taken the book into his own hand, which carried this intimation of his gracious deſign, the four living creatures, as repreſentatives of his miniſtring ſervants, and the four and twenty elders, as repreſentatives of the church, proſtrated themſelves with the profoundeſt reverence and humility before this glorious Lamb, and chearfully united in their ſolemn homage of adoration and worſhip, prayer and praiſe to him, juſt as they had before to the Father on his imperial throne; (*chap.* iv. 9, 10, 11.) all of which, in alluſion to one of the chief muſical inſtruments that were uſed for thankſgiving and praiſe in the temple-ſervice, appeared with harps, as emblems of the melody of their hearts, and of the moſt charming notes in their praiſing ſong; and each of them appeared with cups full of incenſe, (θυμιαμάτων) like the typical cenſers of pure gold, in which the prieſts were wont to burn incenſe before the Lord, as emblems of the prayers that are offered up by the church and its miniſters, (*Pſ.* cxli. 2.) and are made acceptable to God, as preſented with the ſweet perfume of the merit and advocacy of their great High Prieſt. (*Rev.* viii. 3, 4.)

9 And they ſung a new ſong, ſaying, Thou art worthy to take the book, and to open the ſeals thereof: for thou waſt ſlain, and haſt redeemed us to God by thy blood, out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation;

9 And they joined together, as with one heart and voice, in ſinging a moſt excellent ſong, which, for that reaſon, may very properly be called a *new ſong*, ſuited to the preſent joyful occaſion, (*ver.* 7.) and fitted for the goſpel-ſtate, in conſequence of the death of Chriſt, ſaying, Thou, O ſpotleſs Lamb of God, and thou only, art thoroughly qualified for, and deſerveſt the honour of knowing and opening the eternal counſels of God, as ſignified by thy taking the book, and breaking open its ſeals, that the things contained therein may not be entirely hid from all mankind; for thou waſt *led as a lamb to the ſlaughter*, and *madeſt thy ſoul an offering for ſin;* (Iſa. liii. 7, 10.) and haſt bought us out of the bondage of the law, and of ſin and Satan, to God, as his peculiar property, for his honour and ſervice, (*Luke* i. 74, 75.) and for communion with him, and an everlaſting enjoyment of him; which thou haſt done by the ineſtimable price of thy precious blood, * whereby

NOTE.

* The *redemption* here ſpoken of is that which Chriſt made *by his blood*, and is ſaid to be *out of every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation*, which carries the ſtrongeſt intimation, that he paid *the price of redemption*, not for every individual of them, but for *ſome* from among them all.

by thou haſt redeemed not all of every nation, but us from among all others of every tribe, and language, and people, and nation, whether *Jews* or *Gentiles*, with whom we lived, and were equally involved in guilt, and expoſed to deſtruction.

10 And haſt made us unto our God kings and prieſts: and we ſhall reign on the earth.

10 And thou haſt advanced us to the moſt honourable relations to our covenant-God and Father, in making us true *Iſraelites*, who *as* PRINCES *have power with God and prevail*, (Gen. xxxii. 28.) and in conſecrating us to him and his ſervice, as *kings*, to maſter and ſubdue our own ſpirits, and all indwelling corruption, and overcome the world, (1 *John* v. 4.) in a dependence on him and devotedneſs to his fear; and as *prieſts* to have free *liberty of acceſs*, through thee, *by one Spirit to the Father*, (Eph. ii. 18.) and to offer up ſuch ſpiritual ſacrifices of prayer and praiſe, as are acceptable to him on thine account: (1 *Pet.* ii. 5.) And we, through thy favour, merit, and influence, ſhall gain the victory, and triumph over all our ſpiritual enemies, ſin, Satan, and the world, even while we are upon earth. (*Rom.* viii. 37.)

11 And I beheld, and I heard the voice of many angels round about the throne, and the beaſts, and the elders: and the number of them was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands of thouſands;

11 And I looked again for ſtill further diſcoveries of this glorious ſcene, and heard the melodious voice of a vaſt multitude of holy angels, which *encamp round about them that fear the Lord*, (Pſ. xxxiv. 7.) and ſurrounded the imperial throne, and the living creatures, the repreſentatives of goſpel-miniſters, who were neareſt the throne, (ſee the note on *chap.* iv. 6.) and the elders the repreſentatives of the church, who were nearer it than the angels themſelves: Theſe joined in harmonious concert with them, to expreſs their praiſes, *as they* alſo were confirmed by Chriſt, and rejoiced in his favour to men; (ſee *Luke* ii. 13. 14. *Eph.* iii. 10. and 1 *Pet.* i. 12.) their number was ten thouſand times ten thouſand, and thouſands multiplied by thouſands, (ſee *Pſ.* lxviii. 17. and *Dan.* vii. 10.) yea, *an innumerable company* of them, (Heb. xii. 22.)

12 Saying, with a loud voice, Worthy is the Lamb that was ſlain to receive power, and riches, and wiſdom, and ſtrength, and honour, and glory, and bleſſing.

12 Saying, with a ſtrong, lively, and articulate voice, with chearful hearts, and loſty notes of joy and praiſe, Infinitely and only worthy is this exalted Lamb of all the honours, not only of his divine perſon, but alſo of his mediatorial office, who was ſlain in offering up himſelf to God a ſacrifice for ſin, that the general aſſembly and church of the firſt born may be joined to the angelic quire in heaven. (*Heb.* xii. 23.) He, undoubtedly, deſerves to receive all grateful acknowledgments, and high aſcriptions of univerſal authority and dominion over all, and of inexhauſtible riches of grace and glory, and of unſearchable wiſdom and invincible ſtrength, and of every kind of religi-

ous

ous honour, and of all divine and mediatorial glory, and of the liveliest adoring praises, which of right belong to him, who is completely qualified for discharging the high trust that the Father has committed to him.

13 And every creature which is in heaven, and on the earth, and under the earth, and such as are in the sea, and all that are in them, heard I, saying, Blessing, and honour, and glory, and power *be* unto him that sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb for ever and ever.

13 And, methought, I heard the whole creation concurring in the song; even all the angels in heaven, and all the saints on earth, and all the separate spirits of the just made perfect, whose bodies are buried in the earth, and in the bottom of the sea; yea, methought, I heard all creatures contained in them, and particularly all the sensitive creation, echoing to the Redeemer's praise for the deliverance he will bring to them *from the bondage of corruption into the glorious liberty of the children of God*, (Rom. viii. 19,—22. see the note there) saying, May all united thanksgivings, and honour, and glory, and might, and dominion be equally ascribed to God the Father, who sits on the imperial throne, and to the adorable Lamb, who is God, and *purchased the church with his own blood!* (Acts xx. 28.) May these tributes of praise be perpetuated to them jointly from henceforth to all eternity!

14 And the four beasts said, Amen. And the four *and* twenty elders fell down and worshipped him that liveth for ever and ever.

14 And the four living creatures, the representatives of the ministers of the church, who had began the chorus, (*ver.* 8.) closed it, saying, *Amen*, so it ought to be, and so according to our earnest desire it shall be; and the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the body of the church itself, readily consenting, prostrated themselves with humble reverence, and paid their religious adorations to the ever and only living and true God, inclusive of the living Redeemer, to whom they ascribed equal honours, (*ver.* 13.) and who is unchangeably *the same*, in his person and office, *yesterday, and to day, and for ever.* (Heb. xiii. 8.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a privilege and pleasure is it to be acquainted with the counsels of God for our support under every trial, till our happiness shall be perfected in eternal salvation! And what a grief to have them hid from us! But, blessed be God, that, when no creature in heaven or earth was able to reveal them, the Great Messiah of *Judah*'s tribe, and the root of *David*, has interposed between him and the church, and has taken the book of divine decrees, by the Father's grant, into his hand, and has loosed the seals thereof, to lay them open, and to fulfil them in their season. He is worthy of the most grateful acknowledgments and honours on his own account, and on account of his meritorious death, whereby he, as Mediator, obtained authority for this important work. How awful and majestic is his character, as a *lion* to tear his enemies to pieces, and defend his people from their rage against them! And how endearing, as a *lamb* for meekness, that was led to the slaughter, and died a sacrifice to satisfy divine justice for them, whom he redeemed by his precious blood as a peculiar people, and has dignified with the honour of kings and priests to God, in distinction from the rest of mankind, throughout the world, of what nation, or kindred after the flesh, soever they be! O the divine adorations

dorations and worſhip, and ſongs of praiſe, that are and ought to be offered to him together with God the Father, by all his miniſtring ſervants, and the whole church! The innumerable company of angels delight to join with them, in aſcribing all bleſſing, honour, glory, and power, equally to him that ſits upon the throne, and to the Lamb, as the ſame God with him, and as ſuſtaining their proper parts in the economy of ſalvation, that they may be jointly glorified for ever. May all creatures in heaven and earth concur herein, and chearfully ſay, *Amen*!

CHAP. VI.

The apoſtle goes on to an account of the opening of the ſeals in their order, for revealing the purpoſes of God that are to be fulfilled by his providence in ſeven grand ſucceſſive periods; the firſt of which is repreſented in the opening of the ſix firſt ſeals, and relates to the ſtate of the church under the Heathen emperors of Rome, *from the time of this prophecy to* Conſtantine *the Great, about the year of our Lord* 323.—*The firſt ſeal is opened, relating to the glorious ſucceſs of the goſpel in the firſt promulgation of it,* 1, 2. *The ſecond, relating to a great deſtruction both of perſecuting* Jews *and* Romans, *by their wars one with another, till about the year* 138, 3, 4. *The third, relating to great ſcarcity of proviſions in the Empire, between the year* 138 *and* 179, 5, 6. *The fourth, relating to great mortality by a peſtilence, between the year* 211 *and* 241, 7, 8. *The fifth, relating to the cry of the ſouls of martyrs under the altar,* 9,—11. *And the ſixth, relating to the dreadful and total ſubverſion of the Empire, as Heathen, in the reign of* Conſtantine, *about the year* 323, 12,—17.

PERIOD I.

TEXT.

AND I ſaw when the Lamb opened one of the ſeals, and I heard, as it were, the noiſe of thunder, one of the four beaſts, ſaying, Come, and ſee.

PARAPHRASE.

SEAL I.] 1 NOW to give an account in order of the ſeveral prophecies contained in the ſealed book, as they gradually appeared in the opening of each part of it; upon the delivery of this book or roll into the hand of Chriſt, who appeared under the repreſentation of a Lamb, I ſaw, in my viſion, that he ſoon began with opening the *firſt* of the ſeals, to diſcover the prophecies contained in the part which was then unrolled; and I immediately heard an exceeding ſtrong voice, as loud as thunder, which was diſtinctly pronounced by the *firſt* of the four living creatures, or repreſentatives of the miniſters of the church, who appeared like a lion; (*chap.* iv. 7.) and he ſummoned my attention, ſaying to me, Draw nigh hither, and behold what offers to view in this part of the roll, which is now unfolded.

2 And I ſaw, and behold, a white

2 And having come ſo near as to be able to diſcern what was in it, I looked, and, behold, a *white* horſe appeared, the emblem of joy and triumph, and

white horse; and he that sat on him had a bow, and a crown was given unto him, and he went forth conquering, and to conquer.

of the purity of the gospel, and of all divine procedures: And the illustrious person, even the Lord Jesus himself, who sat upon it, like a mighty warrior riding prosperously, was figured out to my view as having a bow in his hand, like what is used in battle for shooting arrows, a fit emblem of the power of his word and Spirit, which penetrates as deep as sharp arrows into the hearts of his enemies, either to slay them before him, or to make them a willing people in the day of his power: (*Psal.* xlv. 5. and cx. 3.) And a glorious crown was set upon his head, the emblem of his royal dignity and victory, *who, for the suffering of death, is crowned with glory and honour.* (Heb. ii. 9.) And he marched forth in a triumphant manner, immediately beginning to conquer, and carrying on his conquests, till they should be completed to the joy of his people, and the confusion of his implacable enemies; * which might point to the wonderful success of the gospel, in its spreading far and wide through the *Roman* empire, unto the conversion of vast multitudes of sinners, especially from among the idolatrous *Gentiles*, and the defeating of all opposition to it, in the first age of Christianity, when its preachers went forth with strength and speed, like horses, to propagate it every where under Christ, who rode in triumph on their ministrations, as a specimen of what should be done in after ages, till the whole number of his elect shall be gathered in, and all his enemies shall be made his footstool. (1 *Cor.* xv. 25. and *Heb.* i. 13.)

3 And when he had opened the second seal, I heard the second beast say, Come, and see.

SEAL II.] 3 And when I saw in my vision that Jesus, the glorious Lamb, had opened the *second* seal to discover the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the *second* of the four living creatures, or representatives of gospel ministers, which appeared to me like an ox or calf, (*chap.* iv. 7.) calling upon me, and

NOTE.

* Mr. *Joseph Mead* and Sir *Isaac Newton*, with others, suppose that the first *four* seals relate entirely to the judgments that were executed on the *Roman* empire; and that the prophecies concerning *the* affairs of the *church* do not come in till the *fifth* seal; and that Christ's *riding on the white horse, conquering and to conquer*, is emblematical of victories obtained to the destruction of his enemies.—But, methinks, riding on a *white horse* does not seem to be a proper emblem of *only* the same sort of *terrible slaughter* of Christ's enemies, as under the very next seal is represented by a rider on a *red horse*; and it seems somewhat unaccountable, that the surprising progress of the gospel by the preaching of the apostles, which, according to Sir *Isaac*'s scheme, was mostly after this vision, especially among the idolatrous *Gentiles*, should be taken no notice of at the beginning of a revelation, in which the church was so nearly concerned. But it was exceeding proper, and tended greatly to their comfort, to represent the judgments of God, in the opening of the three next seals, that should fall upon those who should furiously set themselves against the gospel, after he had so signally owned and blessed it.

and ſaying, in like manner as the firſt had done, Come hither, and ſee what preſents itſelf in the part of the roll which is now unfolded, relating to the next ſucceeding event of Providence.

4 And there went out another horſe *that was* red; and *power* was given to him that ſat thereon, to take peace from the earth, and that they ſhould kill one another: and there was given unto him a great ſword.

4. And, upon my drawing near, I ſaw a repreſentation of another horſe, whoſe colour was as *red* as if he had been all over ſtained with blood, a proper emblem of dreadful war and bloodſhed: And the rider of this horſe was repreſented, as an agent of Providence, * to ſpread confuſion and ſlaughter among the perſecuting inhabitants of the earth, to the deſtruction of their tranquillity and ſafety; and to do this by means of his throwing one party of them into a ſtate of war with the other, that they might ſlay one another: And, as a further emblem of this righteous judgment of God upon them, a huge formidable ſword was put into the hand of the warrior, who ſat upon the red horſe. All which may be conſidered as a prediction of the dreadful deſtruction of infidel *Jews* and *Romans*, thoſe common enemies to Chriſtianity, in the wars between them, eſpecially in the reigns of *Trajan* and *Adrian*, till about the year of our Lord 138, which was a righteous judgment upon thoſe joint perſecutors.

5 And when he had opened the third ſeal, I heard the third beaſt ſay, Come, and ſee. And I beheld, and lo, a black horſe; and he that ſat on him had a pair of balances in his hand.

SEAL III.] 5 And when the Lamb had looſed the *third* ſeal, and ſo laid open the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the *third* of the living creatures, or repreſentatives of miniſters, which appeared with a face like a man, (*chap.* iv. 7.) ſaying to me, as the two former had before, Come near, and ſee what is contained in this unfolded part of the roll, relating to the next remarkable event of Providence; and, looking into it, I obſerved the repreſentation of another horſe of a *black* colour, a fit emblem of mourning and affliction, by reaſon of great diſtreſs: Accordingly, he, who appeared as mounted upon this horſe, had the figure of a pair of ſcales in his hand, † to

NOTES.

* It is hard to determine, whether *the rider* on the *red horſe* be meant immediately of Chriſt, or of ſuch inſtruments as he made uſe of, who is *King of kings, and Lord of lords.* (Chap. xiv. 16.) But, be that as it will, it this viſion of the *ſecond* ſeal was (as is moſt commonly thought) in the time of *Domitian*'s perſecution, about the year of our Lord 96, (Vide *Mill.* proleg. p. 19.) it may very fairly be referred to the vaſt numbers of both *Jews* and *Romans* that fell by the wars between them in *Trajan*'s and *Adrian*'s reigns, about 40 years after the viſion. (See Mr. *Lowman*'s hiſtory of this ſeal.)

† Some conſider *the pair of balances* as an emblem of *plenty*, and of *ſtrict and impartial juſtice*, which was adminiſtered in the reigns of *Severus*, and his ſon *Alexander*. But it rather appears to me that it is here to be taken as an emblem of *affliction*, in a way of judgment upon the Heathen perſecuting empire, according to the purport of the next foregoing and following ſeals, and according to the moſt natural conſtruction of the emblem of a *black horſe*; and the interpretation of

weigh the corn, that should be sold at an excessive price, as in a time of great scarcity next to a famine; (see *Lev.* xxvi. 26. *Lam.* v. 10. and *Ezek.* iv. 16.) which may be considered as pointing to a great want of provisions; and was another judgment upon the Heathen empire for persecuting the Christians under the reigns of the two *Antonines*, between the years 138 and 179.

6 And I heard a voice in the midst of the four beasts say, A measure of wheat for a penny, and three measures of barley for a penny; and see thou hurt not the oil and the wine.

6 And to explain the meaning of this symbolical representation, I heard a proclamation among the four living creatures, saying, So great will be the scarcity of bread at this time, that one small measure of wheat, no more than is sufficient for a single day's sustenance for one man, shall be sold at the extravagant price of a *Roman* penny; and three such little measures of barley, which makes the coarsest bread, shall cost the same: * And, as a further token of the scarcity of other provisions, an order was added to take heed, that no injury be done to the olive-trees and vines, lest they utterly fail of producing oil and wine for the refreshment of the rich, as bread is of the poor; and so the famine become in a manner total.

7 And when he had opened the fourth seal, I heard the voice of the fourth beast say, Come, and see.

SEAL IV.] 7 And when the Lamb proceeded to open the *fourth* seal, and unfolded the next part of the roll, I heard the voice of the *fourth* of the living creatures, or representatives of gospel ministers, which appeared with a face like an eagle's, (*chap.* iv. 7.) calling to me and saying, Come near, and see what this exhibits to your sight.

8 And I looked, and behold, a pale horse: and his name that sat on him was Death, and hell followed with him: and power was given unto them, over the fourth part of the earth, to kill with sword,

8 And having drawn near, and looked upon it in my vision, I beheld a representation of another horse, whose colour was as pale and ghastly as a dead corpse, a fit emblem of death, which ravaged in various forms through the *Roman* empire, in executions of judgments upon them that persecuted the church of Christ: Accordingly there appeared an inscription of the name of the rider of this horse, intimating that he was the king of terrors, called *Death;* and in his train there was a representation of the grave, and of the separate

NOTES.

of it in the next verse seems to confirm this sense. (See *Ibid*'s history of the scarcity of provisions in the reigns of the *Antonines*, which began about the year of our Lord 138 and ended about 179.)

* *A measure of wheat* (χοινιξ σιτου) is variously computed: But if *Grotius*'s account from *Herodotus*, *Hipocrates*, *Diogenes. Laertius*, and *Athenæus*, may be depended upon, it is no more than one man in health needs for the allowance of each day. And a *penny*, which was about seven-pence half-penny of our money, was as much as a labourer could earn in a day, as appears from *Matth.* xx. 2. (Vide *Grotius* in loc.)—Several senses, very contrary to one another, have been put upon *hurt not the oil and the wine;* but that given in the paraphrase, which for ought I know, is singular, appears most agreeable to what I take to be the meaning of the former part of the verse.

ſword, and with hunger, and with death, and with the beaſts of the earth.

parate ſtate, (ἅδης) into which the departed ſouls of the wicked immediately enter to be caſt into hell, which may be ſtyled *the ſecond death.* (Chap. xx. 6, 14.) And I ſaw that commiſſion was given to theſe formidable inſtruments of divine wrath, to make dreadful havock in the deſtruction of vaſt multitudes upon one fourth, or a conſiderable part of the *Roman* empire, that extended to the greateſt extent of all the known regions of the earth; which judgments were to be executed in cutting off ſome by the ſword of war; and others, according to God's threatnings to ſinful and idolatrous nations, (*Ezek.* v. 17. and xiv. 21. and xxxiii. 27.) by a pining famine; and others by a ſweeping peſtilence; and others by the fury of wild beaſts of the fields to devour them; ſo that they which eſcaped one, ſhould fall by another of theſe four heavy calamities, and find no place of ſecurity againſt them. * All which may be conſidered as fulfilled upon the idolatrous *Heathen* perſecutors of the church under ſeveral emperors, whoſe ſeverities began about the year 211, and continued, with little intermiſſion, till about the year 241.

9 And when he had opened the fifth ſeal, I ſaw under the altar the ſouls of them that were ſlain for the word of God, and for the teſtimony which they held.

SEAL V.] 9 And when the Lamb had taken off the *fifth* ſeal, to diſcloſe the things contained in that part of the roll which was then opened, I ſaw in my viſion an affecting repreſentation of martyrs, that had been ſlain in the then preſent, as well as former perſecutions, whoſe ſouls, ſurviving their dead bodies, appeared to me in alluſion to temple-ſervice, † as pro-

NOTES.

* The emperors *Maximinus*, *Decius*, *Gallus*, and *Voluſion*, and *Valerian*, were cruel proſecutors of the Chriſtians; and in their days the Empire was puniſhed, not only with the *ſword* and *famine* or ſcarcity, as under the two former ſeals, but alſo with *the peſtilence*, which is ſignified by *death*, (Jer. ix. 21.) and was diſtinguiſhed from thoſe other judgments, as in the paſſages referred to in the paraphraſe. And it has been obſerved, that *war* brings on *ſcarcity*; and and *ſcarcity* peſtilence, for want of proper ſuſtenance; and *peſtilence*, by depopulating the country, leaves the few ſurvivors an eaſier prey to the *wild beaſts*; and ſo theſe judgments have a natural tendency to make way one for another, in the order in which they are here repreſented. And their reaching *the fourth* or a conſiderable *part of the earth*, is expreſſed in the paraphraſe ſo indeterminately, as to leave room for applying it either to a fourth part of the *ſubjects*, or of the *dominion* of the *Roman* empire, which, I think, is meant by the *earth* or *world* in ſeveral parts of the New Teſtament, and in this prophetic book, (*chap.* iii. 10.) where *the whole world*, and *they that dwell on the earth*, are ſynonimous terms, as they alſo are *Rom.* x. 18. compared with *Matth.* xxiv. 14.; and probably the *earth* ſignifies the *Roman* empire, *ver.* 4. of this chapter.

† As the ſcene of this viſion was *in heaven*, (chap. iv. 1.) *the ſouls under the altar* ſeem to be an alluſion, not (as ſome think) to the blood of the ſacrifices that was poured out at the foot of the brazen altar, which ſtood in a court without the temple; but to their being before *the altar of incenſe*, which was within the ſanctuary; and ſo intimates that the blood of theſe martyrs was not to be conſidered as propitiatory ſacrifices; but as offerings of a ſpiritual nature, like the prayers of *Iſrael* before the golden altar at the time of incenſe, that they might

prostrating themselves at the foot of the golden altar of incense within the sanctuary; a proper emblem to signify, that the offering, which they had made of themselves even unto death, for their faithful and professed subjection to the gospel of Christ, and for the noble witness they had bore to him with constancy and perseverance to the end, was highly acceptable to God, through the odour of his intercession.

10 And they cried with a loud voice, saying, How long, O Lord, holy and true, dost thou not judge and avenge our blood on them that dwell on the earth?

10 And, methought, they, in an humble and devotional manner, cried out, with great fervency and earnestness, O Lord, who art of *purer eyes than to behold iniquity*, and art faithful to thy promises to thy people, and true to thy threatnings against thine enemies, How long will it be e'er thou, in the course of thy providence, wilt glorify thy holiness and justice, and vindicate the honour of thine own name, by reckoning with, and taking suitable vengeance upon, those implacable persecuting enemies, who, through thy great patience, dwell on the earth, and have shed our blood for our stedfast adherence to thee and thy cause? When shall the time come for thy putting a stop to their rage, and bringing confusion upon their wicked designs, that they may no longer go on to murder thy saints and servants for righteousness sake.

11 And white robes were given unto every one of them; and it was said unto them, that they should rest yet for a little season, until their fellow-servants also, and their brethren that should be killed, as they *were*, should be fulfilled.

11 And hereupon they appeared, in token of acceptance with God, as clothed with glorious shining garments, the emblems of purity, honour, and joy, even robes of righteousness, which were put upon every one of them by the free favour of God: And, in answer to their humble enquiry with respect to the destruction of persecuting enemies, and the deliverance of the church from their rage on earth, they were told that they must wait with quietness, and hope about it, a little longer, till the number of faithful martyrs should be fulfilled, by the testimony which others of their fellow-Christians and brethren were also to bear to Christ and his cause, and seal with their blood, as they themselves had done before; and then the troubles of the church from *Heathen* enemies should entirely cease, and issue in a state of prosperity and peace: Herein referring most immediately to the sharp, though short persecution, under *Diocletian*, which was the last that should be inflicted by the *Pagan* empire; and should be brought to its final period, by *Constantine* the Great's obtaining the imperial dignity, and surmounting all opposition, in his victory over *Licinius*, about the year 323.

SEAL

NOTE.

might be perfumed by the intercession of Christ, to recommend the persons and prayers, and religious services and sufferings of his people to divine acceptance.

12 And I beheld when he had opened the sixth seal, and lo, there was a great earthquake, and the sun became black as sackcloth of hair, and the moon became as blood.

SEAL VI.] 12 Accordingly, when the Lamb had broke open the *sixth* seal, and exposed that part to view which was before unrolled, I looked, and beheld a representation of the most terrible and shocking confusion, as though all nature were in the strongest convulsion, just ready to be dissolved. It seemed to me, as if the whole terrestrial globe rocked and trembled, and were shaking to pieces by an universal earthquake; and as if all the brightness of the sun in the firmament were turned into the thickest darkness, and into such a doleful mourning, as uses to be expressed by one's being clothed with a garment of coarse sackcloth made of the blackest hair; and as if the moon had lost all its light, and were turned into a horrid gloom, as red as blood.

13 And the stars of heaven fell unto the earth, even as a fig-tree casteth her untimely figs, when she is shaken of a mighty wind:

13 And, methought, I saw the stars tumble down to the earth from their places in heaven, with as much precipitancy, as blighted or immature figs are blown down from their trees to the ground, when beat upon by a violent storm of wind.

14 And the heaven departed as a scroll when it is rolled together; and every mountain and island were moved out of their places:

14 And, in this figurative representation, I beheld the whole face of the firmament removed out of its place, and no more expanded than if it had been rolled up together, like a huge sheet of parchment, and entirely rolled away; and all the mountains and islands of the earth appeared at the same time, as thrown down and destroyed, never to be seen any more: All which signified the absolute irrecoverable overthrow of the *Heathen* state, and power of the persecuting *Roman* empire, together with the whole frame of its ecclesiastical constitution, from the highest to the lowest degrees and orders of people in it, when *Constantine* the Great mounted the throne, destroyed the pagan temples, that were often built on mountains, abolished idolatry and idolatrous priests on the islands, as well as on the continent, and changed the whole Empire from its *Heathen* to the *Christian* form of government. This grand and surprising revolution was represented to me in a like emblematical manner, as the destruction of the enemies of the church were by the ancient prophets, under the strong and striking figures of an earthquake, of darkening the sun and moon, of the falling of the stars, and rolling the heavens together as a scroll, and removing the earth out of its place; and as the destruction of *Jerusalem* had been described by our blessed Lord. (See *Isa.* xiii. 9.—19. and xxiv. 23. and xxxiv. 4. *Ezek.* xxxii. 7, 8. *Hag.* ii. 21, 22. and *Matth.* xxiv. 29.)

15 And the kings of the earth, and the

15 And such was the terrible fright and consternation of all ranks and degrees of *Heathen* idolators and

the great men, and the rich men, and the chief captains, and the mighty men, and every bond-man, and every free-man, hid themselves in the dens, and in the rocks of the mountains;

and persecutors at this doleful *catastrophe*, and at the heavy punishment thereby inflicted on them, that those of the highest authority, even the emperors or chief rulers of the earth, who exercised royal dominion in the Empire; and the nobles, magistrates, and governors of provinces, and all the principal men in authority; and the richest subjects of the Empire; and the most bold and daring soldiers and commanders of armies; and men of the most undaunted courage that feared nothing before; and people of lower rank, whether servants or masters, slaves or free citizens; persons of all characters, ran about in wild despair, seeking, if possible, to find some retiring place, as they had formerly forced the Christians to do, in obscure caves of the earth, and in the clefts and holes of cragged rocks, or on the tops of mountains; and so *the loftiness* of all sorts *of men was bowed down, and their haughtiness made low*, as was prophesied of those whose *idols should be abolished* in the days of the Messiah's kingdom: (*Isa.* ii. 17,—21.) And this may be considered as a strong and lively prefiguration of the still more dreadful confusion and dismay that will seize all graceless sinners, of every character, at the day of the final judgment and dissolution of all things.

16 And said to the mountains and rocks, Fall on us, and hide us from the face of him that sitteth on the throne, and from the wrath of the Lamb:

16 And, amidst all this terror and anguish, they, like the *Israelites*, when God punished them for their idolatry, (*Hos.* x. 8.) wished, and called in vain for mountains and rocks to tumble down upon their heads, and overwhelm and crush them to death, if by this means they might possibly be sheltered and hid from the presence of the incensed God, who, as sovereign of the universe, was represented as sitting upon the throne; and from the righteous vengeance of the Lord Jesus, for the furious opposition they had made to him and his cause, and for the cruelties they had exercised upon his members, whose just resentments, though *a lamb* for meekness, were now kindled against them, and whom they provoked to act the part of the *lion of the tribe of* Judah, (*chap.* v. 5.) by *tearing them in pieces*, when *there was none to deliver them.* (Ps. l. 22.)

17 For the great day of his wrath is come: and who shall be able to stand?

17 For they found, by woful experience, that the signal threatened day of Christ's terrible justice was then come in its severest executions; and therefore, under a sense of guilt, they cried out with bitter agony, horror, and despair, who of us all shall be able to escape, resist, or bear the fiery indignation, that now comes forth to devour us?

RECOL-

RECOLLECTIONS.

How glorious are the triumphs of the gospel, when Christ rides forth upon it, with all-conquering strength, to subdue his enemies, and make a willing people to himself! And yet how many are the trials of faith and patience, that he suffers his followers to undergo, even unto death, for their fidelity to him! But they need not be dismayed or discouraged at them; for in a little time the cry of their blood shall be heard, and God will avenge himself on their persecuting enemies.—In what a dangerous state are the oppofers of Christ and his gospel! They are liable to be cut off from the earth by terrible judgments, such as war, famine, pestilence, and every kind of violent death. And ah! the consternation, horror, and dismay, that will pierce their guilty souls, when the whole frame of this world shall be dissolved, and the great day of wrath shall come! Then all ranks and orders among them, from the greatest monarch to the meanest peasant, and the most bold and daring of them all, shall tremble before the great God, and the provoked Lamb; and they would rather have rocks and mountains fall on them to crush them to death, and, if possible into an annihilation, than feel the terrors of divine vengeance, which they can neither escape, nor bear. But O the unspeakable happiness of the saints after all their troubles, which shall soon have an end! Though men may kill their bodies, they cannot kill their souls; but they shall go to God, and find acceptance with him through the blood of Jesus, and shall be clothed with illustrious robes of spotless purity, and immortal honour and delight: And when the number of holy martyrs and sufferers for Christ shall be completed, and their testimony to him be finished, they shall join the glorious multitude that are already in heaven, and be ever with the Lord.

CHAP. VII.

A pause between the two first grand periods, represents a short respite from persecution, for the comfort of the saints, from about the year 323 to 337, 1,—3. *And their peace, happiness, and safety, as signified by an angel's sealing* 144,000, 4,—8. *A chorus of the whole church, with which the holy angels join in a song of praise on this joyful occasion,* 9,—12. *And one of the elders informs the apostle of the unspeakable blessedness and glory of those that suffered martyrdom for Christ,* 13,—17.

TEXT.

AND after these things, I saw four angels standing on the four corners of the earth, holding the four winds of the earth, that the wind should not blow on the earth, nor on the sea, nor on any tree.

PARAPHRASE.

AND after the view I was favoured with of the things discovered by the opening of the *first six* seals, relating to the destruction of the *Heathen* idolatrous *Roman* power, I had another vision, in which I beheld four angels, or messengers, that were to be the instruments of Providence for executing judgments in due season on the *Roman* empire, after it had publicly embraced *Christianity*: They appeared to me as standing at the utmost bounds of the northern, eastern, western, and southern parts of the earth, and as detaining the four winds which blow from those cardinal points, * that none of them, as yet, might rise and spread

NOTE.

* It is most commonly agreed, that *the winds* here mentioned are emblems of divine judgments; but *the earth, sea, and trees* are variously interpreted with great uncertainty, according to different conjectures of expositors. The general sense

spread malignant influence upon the inhabitants of the continent, or of the islands in the sea, or upon the the fruits of the ground: Thereby intimating, that as the judgments of God are compared to *winds*, (Jer. xlix. 36, 37. and li. 1, 2.) and to pernicious doctrines, (*Eph.* iv. 14. and *Jude* ver. 12.) so their being held back was an emblem to signify, that, for the present, there should be a calm and peaceful state of the Church and Empire, free from commotions and disturbances, by any gross errors on one hand, or oppressions and desolating judgments on the other: Which may be considered as taking place, for a few years, after Christianity was established by *Constantine* the Great, and became the religion of the *Roman* empire, which continued in a peaceful state during his life, from about the year 323 to the year 337.

2 And I saw another angel ascending from the east, having the seal of the living God: and he cried with a loud voice to the four angels, to whom it was given to hurt the earth and the sea,

3 Saying, Hurt not the earth, neither the sea, nor the

2, 3 And, to shew that this restraint was to be only for a little while, I beheld another angel, or divine messenger, of superior authority, coming up from the eastern quarter with an emblem of the highest honour, and power, signified by his having the seal of the only living and true God; * and he cried with sovereign authority, great earnestness, and compassion for his people, and with a strong voice, loud enough to be heard at the most distant parts of the earth by the other four angels, that had received a commission to execute judgment in God's time and way, according to his will, upon all ranks and degrees of people; saying

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sense is more easily apprehended, while they are considered as things that are exposed to injuries by tempestuous winds; and I know not, whether any thing more particular be *certainly* intended; but, if it be, what is suggested in the paraphrase bids as fair for it, in my thoughts, as any other conjecture.

* This *other angel* seems to have been *Christ* himself, who is spoken of as a *mighty angel*, (chap. x. 1.) and the *angel of God's presence*, (Isa. lxiii. 9.) and is called, by way of eminence, *his angel that bears his name*, and *the angel* or *messenger of the covenant*; (Exod. xxiii. 20,—23. and Malac. iii. 1.) and who rose as the *Sun of Righteousness*, and the *day-spring from on high*, (Malac. iv. 2. and Luke i. 78.) and came from *Judea*, the *eastern* part of the *Roman* empire. He appeared with an eminent ensign of honour, as having the *seal of the living God* upon himself, with power to seal his servants; and spoke with the authority of a God in commanding the other four angels to refrain from executions of judgments, till he had done this important work in favour of his church. Now, to whom can all this be so properly applied, as to Christ himself? He is the head and Lord of all the angels, and is in his office-capacity sealed by God the Father; (*John* vi. 27.) and he only, together with the Father and Spirit, *knows his sheep*, or *those that are his*; (John x. 14. and 2 Tim. ii. 19.) and so he only, exclusive of all creatures, had a certain knowledge of them, and sufficient power and authority to seal them with his Holy Spirit, whereby he marks, distinguishes, and secures them unto the day of redemption. (*Eph.* iv. 30.) And as in sealing those that belong to him, he acts in the character of *Mediator*, and makes use of gospel ministers, in that work, he is fitly represented as *an angel*, and they may be supposed to be included, in a subservient way of operation, with himself, when he said, *Hurt not the earth*, &c. *till we have sealed the servants of our God in their foreheads.* (ver. 3.)

the trees, till we have ſealed the ſervants of our God in their foreheads.

ſaying to them, Stay your hands for a ſeaſon, and execute no judgments on any part of the Empire, till we, who are authoriſed, in our different order, to take care of the ſaints and ſervants of our covenant-God, have put a ſeal upon them for diſtinguiſhing, preſerving, and appropriating them, as a peculiar people to him, and for making them as evidently known to be ſo, as if they were viſibly marked on their foreheads, in token of his owning and ſparing them, as the ſprinkling of the blood of the paſchal lamb on the door poſts of the children of *Iſrael*, and the mark ordered to be ſet on the foreheads of thoſe that cried and ſighed for the abominations in the midſt of *Jeruſalem*, were the tokens, by which they were to be ſaved from the judgments that were to fall upon others. (*Exod.* xii. 12, 13, 23. and *Ezek.* ix. 4,—6.) By this was intimated that the terrible deſolations and peſtilential hereſies, which were to be denounced by the *ſeven trumpets* under the *ſeventh ſeal*, as to be executed upon the Romiſh antichriſtian empire, ſhould be deferred for a while, till in that interim many converts ſhould be brought to ſerve the Lord in ſpirit and truth, and to make a free and open profeſſion of his name, and ſhould be taken into his ſpecial favour and protection.

4 And I heard the number of them which were ſealed: *and there were* ſealed an hundred *and* forty *and* four thouſand, of all the tribes of the children of Iſrael.

4 And hereupon, methought, I heard a declaration of the number, that were thus diſtinguiſhingly marked and appropriated to the Lord; and they, who were thus evidently ſet apart for him, and perfectly known to him, were figuratively expreſſed by one hundred and forty-four thouſand, a large *determinate* put for an *indeterminate* number, as multiplied by *twelve*, a ſquare root, and then by a *thouſand*, to be an emblem of all the choſen and called of God in that age, who were reſerved to him, and built upon Chriſt, the foundation which was laid in the doctrine of the twelve apoſtles, and who ſhould make a brave and bold profeſſion of the pure goſpel in the Chriſtian church, conſiſting of *Gentile* as well as *Jewiſh* believers, which were his truly ſpiritual *Iſrael*, and ſpoken of as ſuch, in alluſion to the *twelve* faithful *tribes* that ſprang from *Jacob*, who, on his having power with God, was called *Iſrael;* (Gen. xxxii. 28.) and whoſe poſterity were the true and viſible church, according to God's covenant with *Abraham*. (Gen. xvii. 7,—9.)

5 Of the tribe of Judah *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of Reuben *were* ſealed twelve thouſand. Of the tribe of

5, 6, 7, 8 Of theſe there were ſealed twelve thouſand, as if ſo many were reckoned to the tribe of *Judah*, from which our Lord in his human nature ſprang, and which therefore has the honour of being firſt referred to. In like manner twelve thouſand were ſealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Reuben*,

of Gad *were* sealed twelve thousand.

6 Of the tribe of Aser *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Nephthalim *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Manasses *were* sealed twelve thousand.

7 Of the tribe of Simeon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Levi *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Issachar *were* sealed twelve thousand.

8 Of the tribe of Zabulon *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Joseph *were* sealed twelve thousand. Of the tribe of Benjamin *were* sealed twelve thousand.

Jacob's eldest son, though by his iniquity he lost the honour and privilege of the first-born, which were transferred to *Judah*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Gad*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Asher*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Naphthali*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Manasseh*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Simeon*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Levi*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Issachar*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Zebulon*. Twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Joseph*, one of the darling sons of *Jacob*. And twelve thousand more were sealed, as if reckoned to the tribe of *Benjamin*, his other chief favourite son. All these make up together one hundred and forty four thousand; in which account of them, the tribes of *Dan* and *Ephraim* are passed by, as having been ring-leaders of idolatry, (*Judg.* xviii. 30, 31. 1 *Kings* xii. 28,—30. and *Hos.* iv. 17.) and so not fit to bear a part in the emblems of the pure church of Christ: But, in their stead, the reckoning refers to the tribe of *Levi*, though they had no inheritance with the rest in the land of *Israel*; (Numb. xviii. 24. and Josh. xiii. 33.) and to the tribe of *Joseph*, the eldest of *Jacob*'s most beloved sons, to whose two sons *Jacob* gave such a blessing as might constitute them heads of distinct tribes. (*Gen* xlviii. 14,—20.)

9 After this I beheld, and lo, a great multitude, which

9 After this vision of the peaceful and prosperous state of those on earth, that were faithful to Christ, and marked out as a peculiar people, * I had another

NOTE.

* The former vision of the 144000 that were sealed, I apprehend to be a representation of the state of the true church *on earth*, for a little interval then coming on, as consisting not merely of the natural seed of *Israel*, the converts from which were not so numerous at that time; but of *Jews* and *Gentiles* together, though it be figuratively expressed by sealing those of the twelve tribes of *Israel*. But this following vision, as I take it, is of the church triumphant *in heaven*, consisting of all true believers of all nations, that either had, or ever should suffer martyrdom for their fidelity to Christ: For it relates to their glorious and blessed state, in its utmost purity and perfection, *after* they shall have got through their tribulations, *when God will dwell among them, and wipe away all tears from their eyes*, (ver. 15,—17.) which, in this prophetic book is, I think, descriptive of the *heavenly state*: (chap. xxi. 3, 4.) And indeed all the expressions here used are too strong and magnificent to be applied to any state of the church on earth; unless we suppose, with some, that it relates to the *Millenium*. But the distant prospect of the time when that should be, seems not so well suited to support the faith and patience of suffering saints in the approaching and succeeding ages, (which is the evident intention of this prophecy) as a representation

which no man could number, of all nations, and kindreds, and people, and tongues, stood before the throne, and before the Lamb, clothed with white robes, and palms in their hands;

ther vision of the glorious state of the church triumphant in heaven, to encourage and comfort me and all sincere believers, against the greatest violence of persecution, that would follow the conversion of the *Roman* empire in succeeding ages of antichristian tyranny and idolatry: And I beheld, with admiration and transports of joy, a vast multitude, which, though distinctly known to God, and comparatively speaking, but a *remnant* and *little flock;* yet absolutely, and in itself considered, is so great as to exceed the power of any creature to cast up, and give their sum total, as they are collected together in consequence of their having been redeemed by the blood of the Lamb, (*chap.* v. 9.) out of all nations, and families, and kindreds, and people of different languages, wheresoever they were scattered through the earth. These stood with holy boldness and full acceptance before the throne of glory, and before Jesus Christ, who appeared as a Lamb that had been slain, (*chap.* v. 6, 12.) to recommend them to the divine favour, by his merit and mediation; and they were arrayed with illustrious robes of righteousness, the emblems of honour and acceptance, purity, and sublime pleasure; and carried palm branches in their hands, the tokens of victory and triumph, joy and praise, like the *hosannahs* that were sung by the *Jews* at their feast of tabernacles. (See the paraphrase and note on *Matth.* xxi. 9.)

10 And cried with a loud voice, saying, Salvation to our God, which sitteth upon the throne, and unto the Lamb.

10 And they lifted up their voices with zealous, loud, and chearful acclamations, saying, We ascribe all the glory, not only of our happy and complete deliverance from the severities of persecutions, but from all the evil of sin and sorrow on earth, and of deserved wrath and ruin in hell; and we give the glory of our advancement to all the dignity and blessedness of heaven, entirely and alone to our gracious, reconciled, and covenant-God and Father, who sits with august majesty on his imperial throne, and is the original contriver, appointer, and giver of all salvation; and to the great Redeemer, who was slain, as a lamb offered in sacrifice to expiate our sins, and procure that salvation which is in him with eternal glory.

11 And all the angels stood round about

11, 12 And, methought, the whole host of angels appeared as standing round about the throne, and encircling

NOTE.

tation of their still more glorious dignity and triumph in heaven, to which they shall be admitted, *immediately* after their tribulations on earth, in their several ages, till the whole number of them shall be completed; when a chorus of all the holy angels shall join their songs, *ver.* 11.: And all the innumerable company of angels can scarce be thought to leave their habitation *in heaven*, and come down to live a thousand years with the saints *on earth;* nor is any hint of that kind given in the description of the *Millenium glory.*

about the throne, and *about* the elders, and the four beaſts, and fell before the throne on their faces, and worſhipped God,

12 Saying, Amen: Bleſſing and glory, and wiſdom, and thankſgiving, and honour, and power, and might, *be* unto our God, for ever and ever. Amen.

circling the repreſentatives of the whole church, and of its miniſtring ſervants; and they proſtrating themſelves with the deepeſt humility, reverence, and adoration before the imperial throne, joined in concert with the *general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born*, (Heb. xii. 22, 23.) offering up thankſgivings and praiſes to God with them, ſaying, as they had before in aſcriptions of glory to God and the Lamb, (*chap.* v. 11,—13.) *Amen*, We heartily concur in this joyful ſong. May all devout and ſolemn acknowledgments and adorations of God, as infinitely bleſſed in himſelf, and the fountain of all bleſſedneſs to others; and may all aſcriptions of honour, in conſideration of his divine perfections, and wonderful works of nature, providence, grace, and glory; and of the conſummate wiſdom that ſhines forth in them all; and may all thankſgivings for every favour of a temporal, ſpiritual, and eternal nature; and the higheſt aſcriptions, that are due from angels and men, together with the moſt ſolemn acknowledgments of his univerſal dominion, and almighty power, be paid to our great and glorious God to the endleſs ages of eternity! *Amen*, ſo it ought to be, ſo we heartily deſire it may be, and ſo we firmly believe it ſhall be.

13 And one of the elders anſwered, ſaying unto me, What are theſe which are arrayed in white robes? and whence came they?

13 Then one of the forementioned elders, or repreſentatives of the church, came near, as another of them had done on a former occaſion, (*chap.* v. 5.) and called to me to engage my attention, and to enquire what my thoughts were of this illuſtrious company, ſaying, Do you underſtand the meaning of this viſion? Who, think you, are theſe excellent perſons that appear ſo glorioufly apparelled with glittering ſpotleſs robes? And from what condition, and how is it that they came hither?

14 And I ſaid unto him, Sir, thou knoweſt. And he ſaid to me, Theſe are they which came out of great tribulation, and have waſhed their robes, and made them white in the blood of the Lamb.

14 To which I anſwered in an humble, modeſt, and reſpectful manner, and with a free confeſſion of my own ignorance, you, Sir, underſtand theſe things much better than I, and, as it lies in your power, I ſhould eſteem it a great favour, if you would pleaſe particularly to inform me of them. Then, to give me a clear and ſatisfying account of this delightful ſcene, he readily replied, This glorious ſhining and palm-bearing multitude, are the faithful ſaints and ſervants of Chriſt, that have bravely encountered ſore trials and afflictions for his name's ſake on earth; (like thoſe mentioned *chap.* vi. 9,—11.) and ſo *through much tribulation have entered into the kingdom of God*; (Acts xiv. 22.) and the ſplendid robes of perfect righteouſneſs in which they ſhine, are not purified and brightened by their own ſufferings, or the blood of martyrdom, any more than by their tears

of

of repentance, or their own obedience; but merely by the atoning blood of the Lamb of God. Not as literally washed with it, which would have made them *red* instead of *white;* but as shed, and applied in its merit and virtue, for the remission of their sins, and for their complete justification, and spotless purity, through faith in him. (See *Eph.* v. 25,—27.)

15 Therefore are they before the throne of God, and serve him day and night in his temple: and he that sitteth on the throne shall dwell among them.

15 It is on this account, as the only meritorious or deserving cause of it, that they are now exalted to a state of the sublimest purity and dignity, joy and praise, in the immediate presence of God as sitting upon his heavenly throne; and that they incessantly worship, adore, and glorify him, as his attendants, in his holy and blessed habitation on high, which, though properly speaking, there is no night or darkness in that state, (*chap.* xxii. 5.) may be called, their *serving him day and night*, in allusion to the priests and *Levites*, who continually served God by night, as well as by day, in the tabernacle and temple; (*Ps.* cxxxiv. 1.) and his glorious majesty, who sits upon the throne, will ever have the most intimate communion with them, and gracious residence among them, to consummate their felicity.

16 They shall hunger no more, neither thirst any more; neither shall the sun light on them, nor any heat.

16 In this honourable and blissful state, they, according to the fullest meaning of ancient prophecy, (*Is.* xlix. 10.) shall never have any painful appetites, like those of unsatisfied hunger and thirst; nor any cravings of greater happiness than they enjoy, much less of earthly things, and much less still of carnal and sensual pleasures: Nor shall they ever be molested any more with fiery trials that scorch like the sun in its full strength; nor be made uneasy, or incommoded by sin or Satan, afflictions or labours of any kind, that are uncomfortable, tedious, and irksome, like the heat of a sultry day.

17 For the Lamb which is in the midst of the throne, shall feed them, and shall lead them unto living fountains of waters: and God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes.

17 For, as to their *not hungring nor thirsting*, the exalted Lamb of God, who, in distinction from the saints and angels that stand before, and round about the throne, (*ver.* 9, 11.) sits with his heavenly Father, possessed of all divine majesty and power, as God-man Mediator, in his throne, (*chap.* iii. 21.) He will perpetually supply and satiate them with the richest entertainments; and will conduct them to the fountain-head of ever-flowing, over-flowing, and ever-living and reviving consolations: And, as to their being *freed from all uneasiness*, the great and blessed God will entirely take away all causes and appearances of trouble from them; and as a tender mother, not only suckles her child, but wipes off the mournful tears that trickle down from it eyes, and doth all she can to cheer and comfort it; so their God will effectually

fectually remove all sorrow from their hearts, and every token of it; all former grievances being passed away. (*Chap.* xxi. 4.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

With what kindness, care, and tenderness doth God indulge his people, by giving them seasonable respites from the troubles of this evil world! Yea, so great is his favour toward them, that, for their sakes, he mercifully averts public judgments from those nations of the earth, that permit them to live in peace and safety; and when, through the corruption of mankind, persecutions and errors threaten the church of Christ, he will take effectual care of his sealed ones, and have a vast many thousands of them here below to own, honour, and serve him. How should it animate their faith, patience, and courage, under all their tribulations for Christ, to think of the glorious, final, and eternal issue of them all! God, in the riches of his grace, will abundantly more than compensate their severest hardships for his sake. Innumerable multitudes of them from among all nations shall shine in the brightest robes of purity, righteousness, and glory, as made white by the blood of the Lamb; and they shall triumph, as with palms of victory, joy, and praise in their hands; and shall worship God with unwearied and uninterrupted pleasure in his heavenly temple above. God himself, as sitting on his throne of glory, will dwell, in the most immediate and delightful manner among them, to banish all uneasiness far from them; and he, as the original fountain, and Jesus Christ as the purchaser, and immediate bestower of all possible blessedness, will refresh and completely satisfy them with the most refined and transporting, substantial, and noble enjoyments, ever fresh and flowing to the utmost of their enlarged capacities and desires. And O, with what chearful acclamations in heaven will they disclaim all merit of their own, and ascribe the entire glory of their salvation to the free and distinguishing grace of God, through the atoning sacrifice of his Son! And with what harmonious concert will all the holy angels join in celebrating the praises of God's perfections, and of his works of nature, providence, and grace! To whom, together with the Lamb, be ascribed all glory for ever and ever, *Amen.*

CHAP.

CHAP. VIII.

The seventh seal is opened, and silence follows in heaven for a little space; and seven angels appear with seven trumpets, ready to proclaim the purpose of God relating to the Roman *empire, the church and the world, after the Christian faith had been publicly embraced, and began to be corrupted;* 1, 2. *But, before they execute their office, another angel appears at the golden altar to offer incense with the prayers of all saints, and then casts fire on the earth, which produces terrible storms of vengeance;* 3,---5. *Hereupon the seven angels prepare to sound their trumpets in their order as signals of the judgments of God that were to be gradually executed on the Empire,* 6. *The first angel blows his trumpet, which is followed with a storm of hail, fire, and blood; signifying the great destruction that should fall on the Christian empire after* Constantine's *death, till the reign of* Theodosius, *from about the year* 337 *to* 379, 7. *The second trumpet is followed with a burning mountain cast into the sea; signifying the invasion of* Italy *by the northern nations, till* Rome *was sacked by* Alaric *about the year* 412, 8, 9. *The third trumpet is followed with the falling of a fiery star called Wormwood, on the rivers; signifying the devastations in* Italy, *that put an end to the* Roman *empire, and set up the kingdom of the* Goths *about the year* 493, 10, 11. *The fourth trumpet is followed with a darkning of the third part of the sun, moon, and stars, signifying further wars in* Italy, *that ended in a total subversion of the power of* Rome, *and the setting up of the Exarchate of* Ravenna *about the year* 568, 12. *And another angel denounces still greater woes to come upon the earth under the three following trumpets,* 13.

PERIOD II.

TEXT.

AND when he had opened the seventh seal, there was silence in heaven about the space of half an hour.

PARAPHRASE.

AND now, to go on with my prophetic vision of the righteous judgments of God, that would fall on the *Roman* empire after it became Christian, but degenerated into persecuting and erroneous principles and practices; when the Lord Jesus, the Lamb of God, who had opened the *six* former seals, (*chap.* vi.) took off the *seventh* and last, to disclose the contents of that part of the roll, I perceived that, as in the temple-worship, the people were silently employed in secret prayer at the time of incense, (*Luke* i. 10.) there was a profound silence in heaven for a little while, in humble expectation of what was next to be revealed after the short interval of the church's peace and prosperity. (*Chap.* vii. 3.)

2 And I saw the seven angels which stood

2 And I saw the seven angels hereafter mentioned, (*ver.* 6.) who stood before God to receive and execute his commands: And there was an appearance of

stood before God: and to them were given seven trumpets.

seven trumpets that were given to them, each of them having *one*, to proclaim the judgments, which were to be executed in seven successive seasons, till they all should be completed.

3 And another angel came and stood at the altar, having a golden censer; and there was given unto him much incense, that he should offer *it* with the prayers of all saints, upon the golden altar which was before the throne.

3 And I beheld another angel, superior to all these, even the Messenger of the covenant, the same head and Lord of all the angelic host, that appeared before with a sovereign command over them: (*chap.* vii. 2.) * And as the high priest on the great day of atonement carried a more than ordinary quantity of incense in a golden censer, and burnt it in the holy of holies before the Lord; so this glorious *angel of God's presence*, who in his incarnate person is the gospel high priest, was represented as standing in a ministring posture before the altar of burnt-offering, to signify the atonement he had made by his blood; and then as having a golden censer, filled with live coals from the altar, to signify that his mediation is carried on in virtue of his expiatory sacrifice: And much incense was given him, to signify the fulness of his merit in the discharge of his priestly office, to which he was called, and for which he was anointed by God the Father, (ινα δωση ταις προσευχαις) to the end that he might give or add it to the humble, importunate, and believing prayers, of all that are cleansed by his blood, and sanctified by his Spirit, to render them acceptable to God in his intercession before the mercy-seat, or throne of grace; as the sweet perfume of incense which was offered on the golden altar was a typical appointment for adding fragrancy to the prayers of *Israel*, his peculiar people.

4 And the smoke of the incense, *which came* with the prayers of the saints, ascended up before God, out of the angel's hand.

4 And as the perfuming smoke of incense, which was made of the finest aromatic spices, ascended up like a cloud to heaven with the prayers of the congregation of *Israel*, that were offered at the same time; so a representation was made of the virtue of Christ's sacrifice, which mingled like a sweet odour, with the prayers of holy worshippers; and, like the incense that passed through the hands of the high priest, was presented

NOTE.

* I think what is said of this *angel* can agree to no other than Christ himself; (see the note on *chap.* vii. 2.) and I am inclined, with Sir *Isaac Newton*, (see his observations on the apocalypse, p. 264.) to understand this *offering of incense* in allusion to the service of the *high priest*, who, on the day of expiation, took fire from the great altar in a golden censer, and carrying a more than common quantity, which might be called *much incense*, burnt it before the Lord within the veil on that day: (*Lev.* xvi. 12, 13. and *Heb.* ix. 4.) For this seems to be the most lively and striking figure of the intercession of Christ. our great high priest, who is *entered into that within the veil, even heaven itself.* (Heb. iv. 14. and vi. 19, 20.) However, it is of little importance whether we take the allusion to be to the *daily service* of the high priest, (*Exod.* xxx. 7, 8.) or to *that* on the *great day of atonement.*

presented together with them before God, by the Mediator and Messenger of the new covenant in his ever-prevailing advocacy, to cover their imperfections, and recommend them to the divine favour for audience and acceptance.

5 And the angel took the censer, and filled it with fire of the altar, and cast it into the earth: and there were voices, and thunderings, and lightnings, and an earthquake.

5 And the Angel of God's presence having thus, in his tender love and compassion to his people, sealed and taken care of them, (*chap.* vii. 2, 3.) and secured a gracious answer to their regular prayers, (*ver.* 4.) before the intended desolations were to come upon the earth; He then, to shew his just indignation against his and their enemies, was represented to me, as taking the censer, and as going from the golden to the brazen altar, where he filled it with the burning coals of this altar, which were an emblem of the wrath of God that could be appeased only by a sacrifice of atonement; and he threw them down with mighty vengeance on the *Roman* empire, the principal part of this earth, that had corrupted the Christian faith, worship, and manners, and endeavoured by all subtle and violent measures to suppress them: And immediately hereupon, there arose a terrible tempest, which produced roaring winds, and loud claps of thunder, and strong flashes of lightning, and a shocking earthquake, as though all nature were dissolving; * which were awful emblems of direful judgments, that were to be denounced, as what should be executed in their order.

6 And the seven angels which had the seven trumpets, prepared themselves to sound.

6 Accordingly the seven angels, who were commissioned to sound the alarm in their respective courses, and were no longer under restraint, as the four angels were before, (*chap.* vii. 3.) seemed to put themselves into a proper posture for blowing each one his trumpet in its course.

7 The first angel sounded, and there followed hail and fire mingled with blood, and they were cast upon the earth: and the third part of trees was burnt up, and all green grass was burnt up.

TRUMPET I.] 7 Then the *first* angel sounded his trumpet; and thereupon I had a vision of a dreadful tempest of hail and lightning, attended with a shower of blood, like one of the plagues of *Egypt;* (Ex. ix. 24, 25.) which signified, in the style of prophecy, great devastation upon the wicked of the earth; (*Ps.* xi. 6. and xviii. 13. *Is.* xxviii. 2. and xxix. 6. and xxx. 30.) and so mighty was the desolation, that it cut off the great men and common people, as emblematically represented by the blast, that such storms ordinarily bring upon the trees and green grass of the field; which may be considered as a figurative

NOTE.

* *Voices, thunderings, lightnings, and earthquakes*, attended with *fire*, are emblems in Scripture language of dreadful calamities, which God inflicts in ways of righteous judgment, and particularly in this prophetic book, *chap.* xvi. 18. and xx. 9.

deſcription of the woful calamities, that were to be brought upon the Empire between the years 337 and 379, by means of the wars of *Conſtantine*, *Conſtance*, and *Conſtantius*, the three ſons of *Conſtantine* the Great, which commenced ſoon after his deceaſe; and iſſued in the deſtruction of his family, and in the terrible ravages, that were made on all ranks and degrees of people, together with the fruits of the ground, and vaſt effuſions of blood, by the northern barbarous nations that broke in upon the Empire; * which might be ſtyled *the third part* of the earth, according to the reckoning of the ancients, who, till *America* was diſcovered, ſpoke of the earth as divided into three parts, of which *Europe* was one.

8 And the ſecond angel ſounded, and as it were a great mountain burning with fire was caſt into the ſea; and the third part of the ſea became blood;

9 And the third part of the creatures which were in the ſea, and had life, died; and the third part of the ſhips were deſtroyed.

TRUMPET II.] 8, 9 Then the *ſecond* angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I ſaw an awful appearance, as though a huge mountain, all on fire, was thrown into the ſea; by means of which the waters of the third part of the ſea were turned into blood, as the great river *Nile* formerly was in one of the plagues of *Egypt*. (Exod. vii. 17, 18.) And this was ſo grievous a calamity, that the third part of the fiſhes, which ſwam in the ſea, were killed; and the third part of men, in their ſhips of war and veſſels of merchandize, were deſtroyed; † which was a figurative prediction of further judgments that ſhould make diſmal havock upon *Rome* and *Italy*, and other parts of the weſtern empire, to the deſtruction of abundance of their inhabitants, ſtrength, and riches; and may be conſidered as fulfilled, by repeated irruptions of the *Vandals* and other barbarous nations into *France* and *Spain*, &c. and by *Alaricus*'s plundering *Rome*, and laying waſte the country round about it, between the years 379 and 412.

10 And the third angel ſounded, and there fell a great ſtar from heaven, burning as it were a lamp, and it fell upon the third part of

TRUMPET III.] 10, 11 Then the *third* angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon methought, I beheld a great blazing ſtar falling down, like a fiery meteor, from heaven to the earth, and it lighted upon the third part of the rivers and ſprings or fountains of waters: And ſo exceeding bitter were the fruits of this,

NOTES.

* The hiſtories of the times that correſpond to this and the following prophecies, may be conſulted in Meſſrs. *Mede*, *Vitringa*, *Whiſton* and *Lowman*, the laſt of which I have moſtly fallen in with, and to which the reader is there referred for theſe and ſeveral other facts under this and the ſucceeding trumpets.

† In the ſtyle of prophecy, *mountains* are emblems of *cities*, and *caſting them into the ſea* of the moſt *terrible deſolations*, Jer. li. 25,—30 and Pſ. xlvi. 2.: *The ſea*, as a collection of waters, is an emblem of large collections of people into one body politic. *Rev* xvii. 15. And *dead fiſhes of the waters* are emblems of the deſtruction of nations, *Ezek.* xxix. 3, —12. And ſo theſe are proper figures to repreſent *Rome*, and the country round about, as tumbling into confuſion and ruin.

of the rivers, and upon the fountains of waters:

11 And the name of the ſtar is called Wormwood: and the third part of the waters became wormwood; and many men died of the waters, becauſe they were made bitter.

this, that from thence it may be figuratively called *Wormwood;* and by the falling down of this flaming ſtar, thoſe waters were infected with ſuch a poiſonous quality, as killed multitudes of people that drank of them, becauſe they were moſt grievouſly bitter: Thereby ſignifying ſtill greater devaſtations, that ſhould cut off ſeveral of the *Roman* provinces, and, in a manner, deſtroy the government itſelf, the ſeat of the Empire, and the fountain of all authority in it; which may be conſidered as emblematical of the following invaſions of the *Goths* and *Vandals*, and other barbarous nations between the years 412 and 493, chiefly under the command of *Genſeric*, who came into *Italy*, and ſacked and plundered *Rome* about the year 455; and under the command of *Odoacer* king of the *Heruli*, who again invaded *Italy* about the year 476, and marched to *Rome*, which he alſo took and plundered, carrying away a great deal of its treaſure and a multitude of people; and returning afterwards, retook *Rome*, conquered all *Italy*, and, aſſuming the title of king to himſelf, dethroned *Auguſtulus* the *Chriſtian* emperor; which was figuratively repreſented according to prophetic ſtyle, by the *falling of a ſtar*, (Iſa. xiv. 12,—15. and Dan. viii. 10.) and by *drying up fountains and rivers of water;* (Iſa. xix. 4,—8. and Hoſ. xiii. 15, 16.) and which was like that plague of *Egypt*, whereby the rivers, ponds, and pools ſtank, and all their waters were turned into blood. (*Exod.* vii. 20, 21.)

12 And the fourth angel ſounded, and the third part of the ſun was ſmitten, and the third part of the moon, and the third part of the ſtars; ſo as the third part of them was darkened, and the day ſhone not for a third part of it, and the night likewiſe.

TRUMPET IV.] 12 Then the *fourth* angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I ſaw a thick darkneſs covering the face of the heavens to ſuch a degree, that the ſun which ſhone on this third part of the earth, gave no light by day, nor the moon nor ſtars by night; inſomuch that all was gloomy and diſmal, entirely dark unto a total eclipſe, which overſhadowed this third part of the earth, both day and night; which might ſignify the utter deſtruction of the imperial city, and of all its authority, both ſupreme and ſubordinate, as lodged in the hands of princes, nobles, and inferior magiſtrates under its former conſtitution, according to prophetic repreſentations of the dreadful downfal of kingdoms and nations, by the *darkning of the ſun, moon, and ſtars*, (Iſa. xiii. 9,—11. and Ezek. xxxii. 7, 8.) * and this may

NOTE.

* Mr. *Lowman*, in his hiſtory of the third and fourth trumpets, obſerves, that ſoon after *Odoacer* had taken to himſelf the title of king of *Italy*, (ſome make it about two years) "*Theodorick*, at the head of the *Goths* in *Illyricum*, attacks *Odoacer*'s new founded kingdom in *Italy*, engages *Odoacer*, overcomes him, and puts him to death; and ſo founded the *Gothic* kingdom of *Italy*, which continued

may be considered as fulfilled between the years 493 and 568, by means of the wars in *Italy*, between the *Goths* and the forces of *Justinian* the emperor of the east, which lasted about twenty years; and in the course of which *Rome* was besieged and taken five times; and all the country suffered the greatest calamities of war, attended with the pestilence and famine, till, at length, *Rome* was entirely subdued, and deprived of all remains of authority, and subjected to the *Exarchate*, which was set up at *Ravenna* about the year 568.

13 And I beheld, and heard an angel flying through the midst of heaven, saying with a loud voice, Wo, wo, wo, to the inhabiters of the earth, by reason of the other voices of the trumpet of the three angels which are yet to sound.

13 And while I was waiting to hear the *fifth* angel sound his trumpet, I saw in my vision and heard, not one of the *seven* but another angel, who flew with the utmost speed through the midst of heaven, and cried aloud with a terrible voice, that all might hear, and the church might take warning, and prepare for all events, saying, Though the judgments which have been foretold, under the four trumpets already sounded, as to come upon the *Roman* empire, and particularly on its *western* part, for its degeneracy since it became Christian, are very great; yet much more tremendous and extensive calamities still are appointed of God to be inflicted, particularly on the subjects of its *eastern* part, by means of the severer punishments that are to be denounced against them, for their gross corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners, by the three other trumpets which the remaining three angels are to sound in their order, as signals of them; and so he ushered them in with three *woes*, distinctly repeated, that would fall in their order upon the *eastern* as well as the *western* empire; the *two first* by the ravages of the *Saracens* under the *fifth* and *sixth* trumpets; and the *third* upon all antichristian nations, *eastern* and *western*, under the *seventh*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How short are the intervals of prosperity and peace to the church of Christ in persecuting ages! But while they are engaged in humble and solemn addresses at the

NOTE.

tinued many years under his successors, till it was subdued by *Narses*, for the emperor *Justinian*, A. D. 553. However under the *Gothic* kingdom *Rome*, though it lost the supreme authority of the Empire, was permitted to retain some appearance of its ancient form of government and magistracy. *Theodorick* made *Ravenna* the seat of his kingdom; yet *Rome* retained it senate and consuls, and the image of its former government.—A little after the *Exarchate* of *Ravenna* was established by the emperor *Justin* II. *Longinus* is sent into *Italy*. He appoints a new form of government: The seat of government was from that time fixed at *Ravenna*, and every city of *Italy* entirely subjected to the *Exarch*, both in things civil and military.—Thus *Rome* lost all her dignity and authority, her senate and consuls; and was put upon a level with all the lesser cities and towns of *Italy*, and became only a small dutchy of the *Exarchate*," &c.

the throne of grace, and commit themselves and all their concerns by faith to the wise, holy, and sovereign disposals of divine Providence, Jesus their great High-priest, altar, and sacrifice, as well as the Angel of the covenant, presents their prayers in his intercession, and perfumes them with the odours of his atoning death, which is like the sweetest of all incense to take away the offensiveness of their imperfections, that they may be graciously accepted, heard, and answered. O happy provision for all the saints in the worst of times! They are taken under divine care and protection, while all the terrors of God's righteous vengeance are coming upon the wicked of this world, and the degenerate professors of Christ's name. What images of horror can be strong enough to paint out their bitter distress! We may read something of it in the striking emblems of tempestuous winds, thunders, lightnings, and earthquakes, dreadful storms of hail, fire, and blood, burning mountains, falling stars, and the most dismal darkness, that throw all nature into convulsions, and spread consternation and miseries, death and ruin, among all ranks and orders of men upon earth, especially among those that wear, but dishonour and abuse, the Christian name by their abominations. And yet how long suffering and slow to anger is the gracious God! What previous repeated warnings and notices beforehand doth he give, by his word and providence, to lead men to repentance, when he is about to come out of his place to punish the inhabitants of the earth! And how gradually doth he proceed in executing first lesser, and then greater judgments upon them, proportionate to the increase of their iniquity, and obstinacy in it, till all former methods having failed of reclaiming them, he makes an utter end of them! But O the comfort and encouragement of true believers! The blessed God takes their part against all his and their enemies; there shall soon be an end of all their troubles, though the wicked fall into mischief, never to rise more. *The righteous shall rejoice when he sees,* but shall not feel *the vengeance; so that a man shall say, Verily there is a reward for the righteous; verily he is a God that judges in the earth.* (Ps. lviii. 10, 11.)

CHAP. IX.

The fifth trumpet is followed with a representation of another star as falling from heaven, and opening the bottomless pit, out of which swarms of locusts come to torment men upon earth; signifying the rise of Mahomet, *and the spreading of his imposture, and of the* Saracen *dominion under him and his successors in the eastern as well as western empire, between the year* 568 *and* 675, 1,—12. *The sixth trumpet is followed with a representation of the loosing of four angels that were bound in the great river* Euphrates; *signifying God's taking off the restraint that had been laid for some years upon the* Saracens, *and now permitting them to invade the Empire again, and make further progress in their conquests, between the year* 675 *and* 750, 13,—21.

TEXT.

AND the fifth angel sounded, and I saw a star fall from heaven unto the earth: and to him was given the key of the bottomless pit.

PARAPHRASE.

TRUMPET V. being the *first wo-trumpet.*

AFTER the solemn warning given (*chap.* viii. 13.) of the three following *woes*, The *fifth* angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I saw the appearance of a large star, representing a person that had fallen, (πεπτωκοτα) like a pestilential meteor, from heaven down upon the earth: And permission was granted him for exerting destructive power, signified by the emblem of a key, with which he might open the gate of hell to let out the unclean

unclean ſpirits that had been ſhut up there, as in a bottomleſs depth of horror and darkneſs; (*chap.* xx. 1,—3.) * which may be conſidered as a figurative prediction of the riſe of *Mahomet*, and of the irruption of the *Saracens* under him and his ſucceſſors into the *eaſtern*, as well as weſtern empire of the *Romans*, to propagate his impoſtures, who revolted from Chriſtianity, and ſet up a dominion among them by the aſſiſtance of infernal ſpirits, as might beſt anſwer their wicked temper and deſign.

2 And he opened the bottomleſs pit, and there aroſe a ſmoke out of the pit, as the ſmoke of a great furnace; and the ſun and the air were darkened, by reaſon of the ſmoke of the pit.

2 And this impoſtor, as I ſaw in my viſion, made uſe of his power to open the mouth of the infernal abyſs; and immediately thereupon a thick and dark ſmoke burſt out of the pit of hell, like the ſmoke that aſcends from a large burning kiln or ſtove, and like that which roſe from the conflagration of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah:* (Gen. xix. 28.) And ſo thick was this hideous ſmoke of the pit, that the face of the ſun, and the whole region of the air were covered with horrid darkneſs; which may be conſidered as an emblem of the groſs errors that would be ſpread by *Mahomet* and his followers, to darken the eyes of men's underſtandings, and hide the light of truth from them, and to deſtroy all that was dear and valuable to them, in great fury, as the judgments of God are expreſſed by like figures. (*Pſ.* xviii. 8. and *Iſa.* xiv. 31.)

3 And there came out of the ſmoke locuſts upon the earth; and unto them was given power, as the ſcorpions of the earth have power.

3 And, to ſet forth the pernicious nature of this black ſmoke, methought, I ſaw the appearance of a formidable ſwarm of locuſts iſſuing out from thence, after the manner of natural locuſts, that commonly lay their eggs and breed in deep pits, out of which they riſe and cover the face of the earth, as they did in one of the plagues of *Egypt:* (Exod. x. 4, 5, 12,—15.) And they, by divine permiſſion, were exceeding

NOTE.

* Some make this *ſtar that fell from heaven* to point at Pope *Boniface* the *third*, who was the firſt that aſſumed the title of *univerſal biſhop* in the year 606 by the grant of the tyrant *Phocus;* and they accordingly explain the *locuſts* to mean the *Romiſh clergy*, and particularly the *Jeſuits*. But this order of men in the apoſtate church, was not founded till ſeveral hundreds of years after the time that this trumpet ſeems to relate to; nor does it agree to the nature of this prophecy, which (as I take it) principally reſpects the *eaſtern* empire: nor to the general nature of the *trumpets*, which ſound *miſery* and *deſtruction*, not ſo much to the true church of Chriſt, as to the *Empire*. I therefore chuſe, with many others, and think it moſt agreeable to the following deſcription of the *locuſts*, to underſtand it of *Mahomet*, who likewiſe began his pretences to inſpiration about the year 606, and under whom, and his ſucceſſors, the *Saracens* made great conqueſts in *Europe*, *Aſia*, and *Africa*, which commenced many years after the Exarchate had been ſet up at *Ravenna*, and a few years before *Mahomet* died, which, according to Dean *Prideaux*, (ſee his life of *Mahomet*, pag. 70,—76 edit. 7.) was in the year 632; and the conqueſts he made were carried on with great rapidity and extent under his ſucceſſors, to about the year 651, ſoon after which a ſtop was put to them by the death of *Othman*, about 655, for about 50 years.

ceeding malignant and mischievous, like the most venomous *land-scorpions*, that have both ability and inclination to wound and torment men upon the earth; which may be considered as an emblem of vast multitudes of *Saracens* or *Arabians*, that would break into the Empire, and especially the eastern part of it, to make speedy and dreadful havock upon it, according to prophetic descriptions of the destruction of nations by prodigious numbers of *grass-hoppers* and *locusts*: (Judg. vi. 5. and Isa. xxxiii. 4.)

4 And it was commanded them that they should not hurt the grass of the earth, neither any green thing, neither any tree; but only those men which have not the seal of God in their foreheads.

4 And as these were not locusts in a *literal*, but only in a *metaphorical* sense, to signify their *multitude* and the *swiftness* of their flight for doing mischief; but could proceed no farther than God would permit them, he effectually charged and over-ruled them, by his providence, not to injure the grass of the earth, nor any green herb, nor any fruit-tree, which natural locusts usually love to prey upon; nor to vent their poisonous and destructive influence upon any but those men, whom he had not ordered to be sealed, as though marked on their foreheads, as he had his own peculiar people, on another occasion before; (*chap.* vii. 3.) which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the special care that God would take to preserve his faithful servants, with their ministers or others, who have the truth of grace in them, to preserve them from the mischievous errors, and cruel violence of those wicked enemies to Christian religion, that the true church might not be destroyed by their ravages, nor corrupted by their new impostures; while he suffered them to infect only the idolatrous church of *Rome*, and to prey upon them.

5 And to them it was given that they should not kill them, but that they should be tormented five months: and their torment *was* as the torment of a scorpion, when he striketh a man.

5 And as a further limitation of their power, even with respect to carnal and apostate Christians themselves, they were ordered, for the present, not to persecute them unto death, nor to murder such multitudes of them, as they afterward would under the *sixth trumpet;* but to harass, ravage, and distress them for a season; which may be figuratively called *five months*, in allusion to the time of natural locusts living in the summer season *: And these savage creatures

NOTE.

* The *natural locusts* are said to live only the five summer months inclusive of *May* and *September;* and the way of the *Saracens* wars upon the Empire was by incursions only in the summer seasons, to which their *tormenting five months* seems more naturally to refer, than to the years of the continuance of their power, by casting the months into days, at the rate of thirty days to a month; and then reckoning each day for a year, the amount of which is 150 years; which some suppose to be descriptive of the *space of time* from the beginning to the end of these incursions of the *Saracens* into the Empire: And as this interpretation has something plausible in it, according to the common scheme of the *trumpet prophecies*, I would refer the reader to what Messrs. *Jurieu*, *Daubuz*, *Mede*,

tures went to the extent of their commiſſion by afflicting them in as grievous and painful a manner, as though it were by the wound of a ſcorpion, when he ſtrikes a man with his ſting; which may be conſidered as a figurative prediction, that theſe *Saracen*-ſpoilers ſhould be permitted to ſpread ſore calamities all around them, though reſtrained from ſuch terrible ſlaughter, as they would afterward make at their next invaſion.

6 And in thoſe days ſhall men ſeek death, and ſhall not find it; and ſhall deſire to die, and death flees from them.

6 And their various ways of diſtreſſing men in thoſe days were repreſented to be ſo ſevere, as would embitter their lives to ſuch a degree, that, as was propheſied of *Judah*, when their threatened miſeries ſhould come upon them for their idolatry, (*Jer.* viii. 3.) they would chooſe death rather than life; and would wiſh for death to put an end to their torments, rather than continue to live under them; but their enemies were reſtrained, at preſent, from affording them this piteous ſort of relief to their groans.

7 And the ſhapes of the locuſts *were* like unto horſes prepared unto battle; and on their heads *were* as it were crowns like gold, and their faces *were* as the faces of men.

7 And ſo dreadful was the appearance of the forms of theſe figurative locuſts, that they ſeemed to be like horſes ready accoutred for war, (*Joel* ii. 4.) and to carry a reſemblance of golden crowns on their heads; and their faces had the ſhape and air of men: All which may be conſidered as an emblematical prediction of the terrible ravage that the *Saracens* would make in battle, with great ſagacity, ſpeed, and ſtrength, according to their cuſtomary way of fighting upon *Arabian* horſes, which, like locuſts, were ſwift of flight in purſuit of victory; whoſe riders would triumph, like crowned conquerors of ſeveral kingdoms, where they ſhould come; and would wear turbants, like crowns, on their heads.

8 And they had hair as the hair of women, and their teeth were as *the teeth* of lions.

8 And, as a further deſcription of this very people, they were repreſented in my viſion, as wearing their hair in an effeminate manner, like women, after the *Arabian* faſhion, either diſhevelled to a great length upon their backs, or elſe plaited and treſſed up; which may be conſidered, as an emblem of their inſinuating and leacherous temper: And the appearance of their teeth was ſharp and ſtrong, like thoſe of lions, to ſignify their rapacious fury, and the prevalence of their arms, as *a ſtrong people ſet in battle-array*, according to the prophetic meaning of ſuch images. (*Joel* i. 6. and ii. 5.)

9 And,

NOTE.

Mede, and Dr. *More* have ſaid upon it. However, it is generally agreed, that the *Saracens* in their firſt expedition chiefly *plundered and ravaged*, but did not commonly *kill* thoſe of the Chriſtian nations, whom they conquered; nor put them to death for their profeſſion of Chriſtianity; nor did they ſucceed in their ſieges of *Conſtantinople* and *Rome* then, as they did afterwards under the ſixth trumpet.

9 And they had breast-plates, as it were breast-plates of iron; and the sound of their wings *was* as the sound of chariots of many horses running to battle.

9 And, to shew that their *defensive* was equal to their *offensive* armament, they, in allusion to the hard horny skin of the natural locusts, appeared with breast-plates, to secure their hearts from mortal wounds, as hard and impenetrable as if made of iron; a proper emblem of their being proof against the assaults of those in the Empire with whom they waged war; and against their being overcome in battle, or invaded, by way of reprisal, in their own land. And the rushing speed and multitude of their armies on *Arabian* horses, which would give dreadful alarms to all that were near them, was represented by the loud noise that locusts make with clapping their wings when they fly in large companies, as if it were the sound of a multitude of chariots and horses, clattering and rushing into the battle, according to the description that is given of armies in prophetic language. (*Joel* ii. 4, 5.)

10 And they had tails like unto scorpions, and there were stings in their tails; and their power *was* to hurt men five months.

10 Furthermore, they were represented in uncommon and surprising forms, as having long tails, like those of venomous scorpions; and they, like them, had desperate stings in their tails; signifying that they would not only make dreadful havock by the power of their arms, but would also infect the wicked inhabitants of the Empire with their poisonous errors, by their false teachers, who, in prophetic style, are called, *the tail;* (Isa. ix. 15.) and so, from first to last, would be very pernicious: And this power of theirs was to be continued, for a considerable time, to its proper period, like the power of locusts, that are lively and active for about five summer months, which is as long as they ordinarily live. (See the note on *ver.* 5.)

11 And they had a king over them, *which is* the angel of the bottomless pit, whose name in the Hebrew tongue *is* Abaddon, but in the Greek tongue hath *his* name Apollyon.

11 And there was something in this representation of them, directly contrary to the usage of *natural* locusts, *which have no king:* (Prov. xxx. 27.) But these figurative locusts appeared as under the dominion and government of a powerful, tyrannical, and malicious ruler, whose likeness they bear, and whose interests they serve; and he is no other than *primarily* the devil himself, that prince of darkness, and of the fallen angels in hell; or *secondarily* one of his wicked messengers, whose doctrine came from hell, whose name, as also the name of his *principal*, answerable to his temper, work, and design, is the *destroyer*, as is signified by the *Hebrew* word *abaddon*, and by the *Greek* word *apollyon:* Which may be considered, as intimating that Satan would be the principal chief; and, by his instigation and influence, *Mahomet*, under him, would be the grand leader of all the mischief and ruin, with respect to civil and religious

ligious concerns, which the *Saracens*, headed by *Mahomet*, and his succeſſors, would bring upon the Empire, by the power of their arms, and the infection of their abominable errors, unto the deſtruction of the bodies and ſouls of men.

12 One woe is paſt, *and* behold, there come two woes more hereafter.

12 Thus *the firſt* ſignally terrible *wo*, which was denounced by the *fifth angel* to denote the judgments of God, that ſhould befal the degenerate Chriſtian empire, under the firſt invaſions of the *Saracens*, is repreſented as what would be paſt and gone, about the year of our Lord 675, when they ſhould bring that war to a concluſion. But, behold with aſtoniſhment, and aſſured expectation! There will be ſtill two other yet more tremendous ſcenes of judgment opened, when the *ſixth* and *ſeventh* angels ſhall blow their reſpective trumpets in their order; the account of which follows.

TRUMPET VI. being the *ſecond wo-trumpet.*

13 And the ſixth angel ſounded, and I heard a voice from the four horns of the golden altar, which is before God,

14 Saying to the ſixth angel which had the trumpet, Loo'e the four angels which are bound in the great river Euphrates.

13, 14 Then the *ſixth* angel blew his trumpet; and thereupon, methought, I heard a certain loud voice, (*φωνην μιαν*) proceeding from the golden altar of incenſe, which was exhibited to my view, like that which ſtood before the mercy-ſeat in the tabernacle, (*Exod.* xxx. 1,—6.) as being four-ſquare, and having four horns, one at each corner of the altar; which may be conſidered as emblems of the interceſſion of Chriſt for his people, and of his power to protect them in the four corners of the earth; at which altar the Angel of the covenant offered up the prayers of all ſaints in the immediate preſence of God, as has been repreſented: (*chap.* viii. 3.) And this being the voice of Chriſt himſelf, he, with ſovereign authority, commanded the *ſixth* angel that had the *ſecond wo-trumpet*, ſaying to him, Set at liberty the four deſtroying angels, who have been under reſtraint for ſome time paſt, as meſſengers of wrath that are bound, as it were, in chains, at the great river *Euphrates* *; which may be conſidered as a figurative

NOTE.

* I ſhould be ſtrongly inclined, with Mr. *Mede*, and his many followers, to conſider the *ſixth trumpet*, as referring to the devaſtations made by the *Ottoman* or *Turkiſh* empire, were it not that this makes too great a gap upon the *cloſe ſeries* of prophecy, which, as I take it, is carried on from the beginning to the end: For the *Ottoman* empire did not riſe till *Ottoman* founded it, from whom it took its name, and who died about the year 1326, which is between ſix and ſeven hundred years after what I apprehend to be the period of the *fifth trumpet*; and therefore is not eaſily reconcileable to the regular and connected order of theſe predictions; unleſs upon the plan of *ſynchroniſms*, which, though ſo commonly received, have always thrown the whole ſcheme into ſuch confuſion in my mind, as I could never get over, or tell how to adjuſt: And yet, I muſt confeſs, that the *ſixth trumpet* has long appeared in my thoughts to be the moſt difficult, of any other part of the prophecy, to be reconciled with the orderly and well connected

rative prediction of the order that would be given and fulfilled in the diſpenſations of Providence, to take off the reſtraint which had been laid on the *Saracens* for about fifty years, (ſee the note on *ver.* 1.) that they might go forth from all quarters of their land, to execute yet further judgments upon the degenerate Chriſtian empire in every part of it toward the four corners of the earth, as four other angels had been before ordered to hold back, or let out, the four winds, that were deſigned for judgments, according to the will of God. (*Chap.* vii. 1.)

15 And the four angels were looſed, which were prepared for an hour, and a day, and a month, and a year, for to ſlay the third part of men.

15 Hereupon the four angels, or meſſengers of divine wrath, were ſet at liberty, and ſtood ready to execute the judgments which God had further deſigned to bring upon the Romiſh pretendedly Chriſtian, but really *antichriſtian* empire, according to the exact time of his appointment, whether it be to an hour, or a day, or a month, or a year, juſt as he ſhould pleaſe to order it in his providence; and, in that preciſe time, to cut off a great number of the inhabitants of the Empire, under the ſtyle of the third part of the known world; which may be conſidered as a figurative prediction of the ſtill more terrible deſolation that the *Saracens* would make in the Empire, between the years 675 and 750, when they would enter *Spain* about the year 713 or 714, and obtain a complete victory over the *Spaniards;* ſoon after which they would overrun the whole country; and afterwards invade *France*, till they were defeated by *Charles Martal*, in a terrible and deciſive battle, which put an entire ſtop to their arms about the year 734.

16 And

NOTE.

nected ſeries of correſpondent events But I am much obliged to the learned Mr. *Lowman*, whoſe hiſtory of facts may *probably* account for it, which is all that I can pretend to in this and ſeveral other inſtances. I have therefore entirely followed the track that he has drawn out before us, relating to the *ſixth trumpet*, as I have done, and ſhall in great meaſure do, in other particulars, where I think him to be in the right, referring the reader to conſult his collection of authorities, which I now give notice of, once for all, whether his name be mentioned in the ſeveral places, or not. And the reaſon given in my paraphraſe on this verſe, why the deſtroying angels or meſſengers of wrath (which I take to mean the *Saracens*, as inſtruments of divine Providence, according to what is ſaid of them, *ver.* 16, 17.) are ſpoken of as *four*, ſeems to me the moſt likely of any other that I have met with, and falls in with what this learned writer goes into, according to the obſervation of Mr. *Daubuz*, who takes the number *four* to denote a *univerſality* of the matter compriſed, as the *four winds* ſignify *all the winds*, Jer. xlix. 36. *The four corners of the earth. all parts* of the earth, *Iſa* xi 12. and *the four corners of the land. all parts* of the land of *Judea*, Ezek. vii. 2. And theſe deſtroying angels were bound in the great river *Euphrates*, according to his account, by the diviſions and quarrels of the *Saracens* after the death of *Othman*. about the ſucceſſion to the Empire, which kept them near the river *Euphrates*, where moſt of their battles were fought, and prevented their uſual invaſions and incurſions into the *Roman* empire about 50 years.

16 And the number of the army of the horſemen *were* two hundred thouſand thouſand: and I heard the number of them.

16 And the multitude of their horſemen, which their armies would moſtly conſiſt of, was repreſented to be ſo prodigiouſly great, that, as innumerable companies are expreſſed by *thouſands of thouſands*, and *ten thouſand times ten thouſand;* (chap. v. 11. and Dan. vii. 10.) ſo one would be apt to expreſs this by two myriads of myriads, in aſtoniſhment at it: * And I heard this hyperbolical proclamation of their number, to ſignify that they would be, as it were, paſt all account.

17 And thus I ſaw the horſes in the viſion, and them that ſat on them, having breaſt-plates of fire, and of jacinth, and brimſtone: and the heads of the horſes *were* as the heads of lions; and out of their mouths iſſued fire, and ſmoke, and brimſtone.

17 And in the like aſtoniſhing manner I beheld in my viſion, that theſe innumerable and formidable *Arabians, terrible as an army with banners*, rode upon warlike horſes, and that their riders were furniſhed with an armour of breaſt-plates, defenſive and repelling, as fire; illuſtrious, firm, and ſolid, as the jacinth ſtone; and invincible, as burning brimſtone, which cannot eaſily be extinguiſhed: † And the heads of their horſes had an aſpect as bold, fierce, and furious, as the heads of ravening lions: And there was a moſt tremendous appearance of ſtreams of fire, and ſmoke, and brimſtone, proceeding out of the mouths of the horſes and their riders, with deſtructive force: All which may be conſidered as emblematical predictions of the waſting and murderous effects of this cruel victorious army of the *Saracens*, which would breath out nothing but miſery, deſolation, and ſlaughter.

18 By theſe three was the third part of men killed, by the fire, and by the ſmoke, and by the brimſtone, which iſſued out of their mouths.

18 By theſe three powers of their armies, for dreadful devaſtation, as ſignified by the fire, and ſmoke, and brimſtone, which appeared as proceeding out of their mouths, vaſt numbers of the invaded people of the Empire were miſerably ſlain, and the reſt ſuffered the greateſt ravage and calamities of every other kind. (*ver.* 20.)

19 For their power is in their mouth, and in their tails: for their tails *were* like unto ſerpents, and

19 For, according to this repreſentation of them, their power of ſpreading deſolation, death, and ruin, ſeemed to proceed out of their mouths, which ſpoke terror and miſchief, whereſoever they came; yea, like the firſt train of *Saracen* invaders, (*ver.* 10.) they were equally miſchievous with their tails: For their tails had

NOTES.

* It is not to be ſuppoſed that any army upon earth could conſiſt of *two hundred thouſand thouſand*, or two myriads of myriads, as the words ſignify. (δυο μυριαδες μυριαδων) But as the *Saracens* were famous for the vaſt and almoſt incredible multitude of forces, which conſiſted chiefly of *cavalry* or *horſemen*, this number is mentioned in the hyperbolical ſtrain to denote a ſort of innumerable multitude.

† What is the meaning of breaſt-plates of *fire, jacinth, and brimſtone*, I conceive can be only conjecture; and I have ventured to make mine, as being little ſatisfied with any other, and leaſt of all with that of *cannon* and *brimſtone-powder*, or gun-powder, which are modern inventions, ſome hundreds of years after the time that I think this prophecy refers to. (See the note on *ver.* 14.)

and had heads, and with them they do hurt.

had an appearance like those of a monstrous sort of serpents, that are said to have two heads, one in the front, and the other at the tail of their bodies, for discharging their poison; which may be considered as a figurative prediction of the terrible wrath, destruction, and pestilential errors, that would be poured out by the *rear* as well *main body* of the *Saracen* armies in their second series of incursions into the *Roman* empire, which they would over-run with a deluge of destruction to the bodies and souls of men, from the beginning to the end of their victories, by the power of their princes, who, in prophetic style, are called *the head;* and by their false teachers, who are called *the tail.* (Isa. ix. 14, 15.)

20 And the rest of the men which were not killed by these plagues, yet repented not of the works of their hands, that they should not worship devils, and idols of gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and of wood: which neither can see, nor hear, nor walk:

21 Neither repented they of their murders, nor of their sorceries, nor of their fornication, nor of their thefts.

20, 21 And, notwithstanding all these dreadful judgments, the remainder of those men, who escaped death by the fury of these invaders, were so stupid and obstinate as not to take conviction of, and be reclaimed from their evil courses, which had brought these severe calamities upon them, that they might renounce and depart from their idolatrous worship of demons, and of the images, which their own hands had made of earthly materials; such as gold, and silver, and brass, and stone, and wood, which are senseless, dumb idols, that can neither see who they are that adore them; nor hear their prayers; nor take one step to answer them for their relief; Nor did they repent of, and renounce their murderous practices; nor their enchantments; nor their whoredoms; nor their robberies, that they had defiled themselves with: Which may be considered as a prediction of the idolatrous worship of angels and departed saints, and of images made of all those sorts of materials, that would begin to prevail among the Popish part of the Empire in those days, and would be encouraged and confirmed by Pope *Gregory* the Second, in opposition to the Emperor *Leo*'s orders to remove images out of the churches of *Italy*, about the year 726; and, instead of repenting of their image-worship, it was, at length, established by the authority of councils: And the other foretold abominations would still reign among them in their murdering the saints, in their pretended exorcisms in their manifold uncleannesses, and in their various kinds of cheats, and impositions on the people; which, so far from being repented of, would grow more and more flagrant, till they should bring upon themselves the still more tremendous woes to be denounced by the *seventh* and *last trumpet;* (chap. xi. 14, 15.) and to be fulfilled by the pouring out of the *seven vials.* (Chap. xvi.)

RECOL-

RECOLLECTIONS.

How tremendous are the denunciations, and how sure, after solemn neglected warnings, are the executions of God's wrath on his enemies, for their oppressions of his church, and their other multiplied abominations! He, whose kingdom rules over all, has the most terrible armies of men and devils at his command, to execute deserved judgments by them. And how easily can he restrain, or let them loose, according to his sovereign and holy will, beyond which none of them can go! The instruments of Providence, as his messengers, shall, in his appointed time, bring distress and ruin upon carnal and idolatrous professors of Christ's name: They, like devouring locusts, raging lions, and venomous scorpions, spread their terrors and pestilential principles, to destroy the lives and liberties, bodies and souls of men, under the influence of tyrannical powers and false prophets on earth, and of the devil, who heads them, and sends them forth like a great smoke of horrid darkness, that rises out of the bottomless pit. They carry the face of men for sagacity, and of women for insinuation; but are really as ravenous and destructive, as the most furious beasts of prey and malignant serpents. But how great soever the plagues be, that, in the way of God's righteous judgments, are inflicted by one sort of Antichristian enemies, like *Mahometan-Saracens*, upon another, like *the papists*, for their idolatries, deceits, debaucheries, thefts, and murders; such is their stupidity and hardness of heart, that they will not repent of their crimes, nor be reformed; but still persist in them, and grow worse and worse, till, at length, all the vials of God's wrath shall be poured out upon them. But O what a comfort is it to God's own church and people, that Christ, who appears at the golden altar on their behalf, will take care of them, that they may have a hiding-place in every day of evil, and that the miseries, which will come upon others, shall not touch them, who have this seal, as it were on their foreheads, *The Lord knows them that are his!* (2 Tim. ii. 19.)

CHAP. X.

An august introduction to the seventh trumpet, in which the Angel of the covenant is represented as interrupting the train of prophecy, for a small interval, and as presenting a little open book, and uttering his voice as a lion, which is followed with seven thunders, intimating what he would further reveal under the seven vials, 1,—3. *A voice from heaven forbids writing, at present, what was uttered by the seven thunders,* 4. *The angel solemnly swears that, at the expiration of the following prophecies, time should be no more, and that in the days of the seventh angel the mystery of God should be finished;* 5,—7. *A voice calls to John (who observes it) to eat the book, which would be sweet in his mouth, and bitter in his belly,* 8,—10. *And tells him he must further prophesy of the yet future state of the church and of the world, in a successive order of time,* 11. *which was to be from about the year* 756, *(when the Pope of* Rome *was first invested with temporal dominion) for* 1260 *years then to come, according to the general description that was to be given of it in the three following chapters.*

TEXT.

AND I saw another mighty angel come down from heaven, clothed

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the former representations which had been made to me of the state of the *Roman* empire and of the church, first *before*, and then *after*, the legal establishment of Christianity, I was favoured with

thed with a cloud, and a rainbow *was* upon his head, and his face *was* as it were the ſun, and his feet as pillars of fire.

a ſucceeding viſion, in which I beheld another angel, different from, and ſuperior to thoſe that had trumpets given them to ſound, even Chriſt himſelf, (ſee the note on *chap.* vii. 2.) who, though acting the part of a divine meſſenger in human nature, is partaker of proper deity, as *the mighty God;* (Iſa. ix. 6.) methought, I ſaw this glorious perſon deſcend from heaven, and covering himſelf with an illuſtrious cloud, as an emblem of his coming to make a further revelation for the inſtruction and comfort of the church; he appeared like the great Jehovah, *who makes the clouds his chariot,* (Pſ. civ. 3.) as our bleſſed Lord did in his deſcent upon mount *Sinai*, and aſcenſion to heaven: (*Exod.* xxxiv. 5. and *Acts* i. 9.) And there was the circular form of a beautiful rainbow over his head, like that which appeared round about the throne of God, (*Ezek.* i. 28. and *Rev.* iv. 5. ſee the note there) in token of his being ever mindful of his covenant in the darkeſt times: (ſee *Gen.* ix. 13,—17.) And his countenance ſhone with a dazzling luſtre, like the ſun in its meridian brightneſs, to the admiration and joy of his people; and his feet appeared with awful majeſty and ſtrength, like pillars of burning braſs, for ſupporting the faithful, and of fire for conſuming his enemies, much after the ſame auguſt manner in which he had exhibited himſelf before. (*Chap.* i. 15, 16. See the paraphraſe there.)

2 And he had in his hand a little book open: and he ſet his right foot upon the ſea, and *his* left *foot* on the earth,

2 He alſo appeared as holding in his hand a little unfolded book, or roll, being the laſt part of the book which had been ſealed, but the ſeals of which he had undertaken to looſe; (*chap.* v. 1,—7.) and which might be called a *little book*, as it was now only the remainder of the whole, containing ſuch events as ſhould fall out in ages yet to come. And he having deſcended to this terraqueous globe, as conſiſting of land and water, methought, I ſaw him ſtand with his *right* foot on the *ſea*, and with his *left* on the *earth*, to ſignify his ſovereign dominion over all perſons and things in *both;* and that he would extend his government and grace to the continents of *Aſia*, *Africa*, and *Europe*, with their iſlands, including both the Eaſtern and Weſtern empire, and even *the uttermoſt parts of the earth*, which his Father promiſed him the poſſeſſion of. (*Pſ.* ii. 8.)

3 And cried with a loud voice, as *when* a lion roareth: and when he had cried, ſeven thunders uttered their voices.

3 In this ſituation he, who has been ſpoken of as *the lion of the tribe of* Judah, (*chap.* v. 5.) made proclamation with a ſtrong and tremendous voice, as loud as the roaring of a lion, commanding ſilence and attention to what would follow: And no ſooner had he given forth this order, than I heard ſeven other voices, as loud, awful, and terrible, as the greateſt

clap of thunder, to denounce those judgments of God *in general*, which were to be particularly executed, in their order, on his antichristian enemies, by the pouring out of *seven vials* under the *seventh trumpet*.

4 And when the seven thunders had uttered their voices, I was about to write: and I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Seal up those things which the seven thunders uttered, and write them not.

4 And when the seven thunder-like voices had finished their articulate denunciations, I was going to write them down, as apprehending that I was authorized so to do by the order before given me, (*chap.* i. 19.) and that they contained something of great consequence, for the comfort of the church under their antichristian-oppressions: But I was immediately stopped short, and prevented by another voice, which I heard, as directed to me from the throne of God in heaven, saying, Keep the things in your own breast, which have been uttered by the voices that were like seven thunders; ponder them in your heart, and conceal them, as yet, from public notice, as closely as if they were sealed up in a book, that none might read them: And there is no need for you to write them *now*, as the general hints, given by them, will be more particularly drawn out in some following visions; referring to those of the *seventh trumpet*, and the *seven vials* under it, which were afterwards to be revealed and recorded.

5 And the angel which I saw stand upon the sea, and upon the earth, lifted up his hand to heaven,

6 And sware by him that liveth for ever and ever, who created heaven and the things that therein are, and the earth and the things that therein are, and the sea and the things which are therein, that there should be time no longer:

5, 6 And to assure me of the certainty and importance of the things that were further to be revealed, relating to the affairs of the church and of the world in ages yet to come, the glorious Angel, whom, (as is said, *ver.* 2.) I saw standing with one foot upon the sea, and the other upon the earth, was represented to my view, as lifting up his hand to heaven, the throne of God's glory, according to the ancient manner and posture of taking solemn oaths; (*Gen.* xiv. 22. and *Dan.* xii. 7.) and as swearing by the eternal, almighty, and immortal God, who, in distinction from all idols, is *from everlasting to everlasting*, the only living and true God, and the Creator of the upper and lower worlds; of heaven and all the hosts thereof, whether in the aerial, the starry, or the heaven of heavens; and of the terraqueous globe, consisting of the earth and sea; and all things contained therein: And the purport of this solemn oath, which Christ took, as the Angel of the covenant and God's Messenger, was, that, as formerly in answer to the question, How long it should be to the end of the then predicted wonders? He sware that it should be for *a time, times, and a half**, meaning twelve hundred

NOTE.

* *A time, times, and a half* time, and *time shall be no longer*, seem to refer to the same period, and intimate, not that all time should then come to an end; but that

dred and ſixty years; (*Dan.* xii. 6, 7.) ſo he now ſware, that there ſhould be no longer time, than *that*, before all antichriſtian enemies ſhould be deſtroyed, and a glorious ſtate of the church ſhould take place, and put a final period to popiſh darkneſs, ſuperſtition, and idolatry, as will more diſtinctly appear in after-parts of this prophecy, though the time ſhall not be yet. (χρονος ουκ εσται ετι.)

7 But in the days of the voice of the ſeventh angel, when he ſhall begin to ſound, the myſtery of God ſhould be finiſhed, as he hath declared to his ſervants the prophets.

7 But he ſware that in the days which would be pointed out by the denunciations of the *ſeventh* angel, when he ſhould begin to ſound his trumpet *, then all divine revelations and diſpenſations of Providence, relating to the trials and the ſucceeding happy days of the church, and the deſtruction of antichriſt and exaltation of the kingdom of the Lord Jeſus in all its glory, ſhould be brought to a concluſion, which at preſent are ſecrets, and will all along in great meaſure be ſo, till correſpondent facts, in a regular ſeries, ſhall explain them, according to the prophecies and declarations that God has given of them to his ancient prophets, and particularly to his ſervants, *Daniel* (chap. vii. 25,—28. and xii. 6, 7.) and *Zechariah.* (Chap. xiv. 9.)

8 And the voice which I heard from heaven

8 And after this ſcene of viſion, the voice, which I had heard from heaven, (*ver.* 4.) called to me a-

NOTES.

that the glorious ſtate of the church ſhould not be yet, till after the expiration of 1260 years, which are ſignified by other prophetic numbers that are made uſe of to give a *general view* of this period in the 11th, 12th, and 13th chapters of this viſion. Accordingly *a time, times, and a half time*, as reſolved into prophetic days, ſignify 1260 years, reckoning each day for a year, and each year to conſiſt of twelve months of thirty days each month: For *three years*, which anſwer to *time, times*, (meaning two more times) and *a half time*, or half a year, make up 42 months, or 1260 years, which in our apoſtle's prophecy are parallel deſcriptions of the exact time of *the holy city's being trodden under foot by the* Gentiles, and of the *witneſſes prophecying in ſackcloth*; (chap. xi. 2, 3.) as alſo of the church's *flight into, and nouriſhment in the wilderneſs*, (chap. xii. 6, 14.) and of antichriſt's or *the beaſt's reign.* (Chap. xiii. 5.)—It is evident, that, were we to take theſe numbers of days, months, and years, in a *literal* ſenſe, the ſpace of time would be abundantly too ſhort for all the events that are ſpoken of as to be fulfilled in that time, which includes the whole period of the laſt ſtate of the ſufferings of the church to its ſucceeding glorious ſtate, in which Satan ſhall be ſhut up for a thouſand years: But the other way of computing is agreeable to the prophetic ſtyle in former ages, which makes *a time* ſtand for a year, *Dan.* iv. 25.; and *a day* for a year, *Numb.* xiv. 34. and *Ezek* iv. 5, 6. And *ſeventy weeks* ſignify not ſeventy times ſeven weeks of *natural* days, but ſeventy times ſeven years, *Dan.* ix. 24.; which, according to Sir *Iſaac Newton*, were 490 years from the time that the diſperſed *Jews* ſhould be re-incorporated into a people and holy city, until the death and reſurrection of Chriſt. (See his Obſervations on *Daniel*, p. 130. See alſo his note, p. 137. and 138, about the way of computing years, as conſiſting of 12 months, and every month of 30 days.)

* The *ſeventh trumpet*, in courſe, was to ſound next, as beginning at the expiration of the *ſixth*; but is deferred to *chap.* xi. 15. &c. by the interpoſition of a ſolemn preface, with which Chriſt, the Angel of the covenant, appeared, at the beginning of this chapter, to introduce it.

heaven ſpake unto me again, and ſaid, Go, *and* take the little book which is open in the hand of the angel which ſtandeth upon the ſea, and upon the earth.

9 And I went unto the angel, and ſaid unto him, Give me the little book. And he ſaid unto me, Take *it*, and eat it up; and it ſhall make thy belly bitter, but it ſhall be in thy mouth ſweet as honey.

10 And I took the little book out of the angel's hand, and eat it up; and it was in my mouth ſweet as honey: and aſſoon as I had eaten it, my belly was bitter.

11 And he ſaid unto me, Thou muſt propheſy again before many peoples, and nations, and tongues, and kings.

gain, ſaying, Go up to the Angel of the covenant, who you obſerve ſtands with his *right* foot on the ſea, and his *left* on the earth, (*ver.* 2.) and receive from him the little book or roll, which is exhibited as unfolded in his hand, that you may have a clear inſight into the great things contained therein, with a commiſſion for making them known to others.

9 Accordingly, in obedience to the divine command, I drew near to the Head of all principalities and powers, and humbly beſought him to deliver that little book to me, for my peruſal. And he thereupon holding it out, ſaid to me, as he formerly did to the prophet *Ezekiel*, (chap. iii. 1,—3.) Take it, according to your requeſt; and then read and meditate upon it, and lay it up in your heart, till you underſtand and digeſt it, and be ſuitably affected with it, which, in figurative language, may be called eating it up; (ſee *Jer.* xv. 16.) and in ſo doing, you will find ſome of its contents, relating to the ſore afflictions and perſecutions that the church is to ſuffer, will be as extremely grievous to your mind as the bittereſt ſenſations can be to your bowels: But the knowledge of the mind and will of God herein, as his ſecrets revealed to you, and more eſpecially with reſpect to the tender care which he will all along take of his people, and to the final iſſue of all their troubles, and the glory that is to follow them, will be as ſweet to your thoughts, as honey itſelf can be to your palate.

10 And I readily took the little open book or roll out of the Angel's hand, and did eat it up in the manner he ordered me, and I found by experience, as he told me I would, that my inſight into the great myſteries revealed therein, taking them all together, was as delightful to my ſoul, as it is poſſible for honey to be to the taſte. I, like the prophet, (*Jer.* xv. 16.) *found God's words, and did eat them; and his word was unto me the joy and rejoicing of my heart:* And afterward, when I came to reflect on the tribulations that muſt befal the church of Chriſt, before it attains its higheſt proſperity and glory on earth, my ſoul was as deeply affected with pain and anguiſh in the doleful proſpect, as the bittereſt tortures can be to the bowels.

11 Then this glorious Angel ſaid to me, Sweet as theſe things are in one view, and bitter in another, you muſt not keep them to yourſelf, as you was ordered to do by the general intimations that were given you by the ſeven thunder-like voices; (*ver.* 4.) but you muſt go on to publiſh theſe, for the ſupport and comfort of my people, in the further revelations that ſhall be made of them to you, as to come to paſs

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in their succeſſive order *, upon many people, and nations, and countries of different languages, and upon rulers and potentates, as well as lower ranks of people, with regard to what ſhall befal them till the whole ſcheme of God's purpoſes, prophecies, and providences ſhall be accompliſhed concerning them, and ſhall end in the total overthrow of all antichriſtian-enemies, and in the complete ſalvation of the church.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How endearing, auguſt, and awful are the repreſentations Chriſt has made of himſelf, as the Angel of the covenant, with a rainbow on his head, and a countenance as bright and dazzling as the ſun; and with feet, like pillars of fiery metal, ſtanding on the earth and ſea, and a voice as loud and tremendous as the roaring of a lion! He is ever mindful of his covenant with his people in the worſt of times; and amidſt all the troubles that are denounced to his enemies, as with the voice of thunder, has all things under his dominion; and appears with illuſtrious majeſty for the relief and comfort of thoſe that belong to him, and for the terror and deſtruction of his and their enemies. Theſe are things worthy of the cloſeſt meditation, that we may underſtand, and be ſuitably affected with them, as far as they are revealed, with a commiſſion from Chriſt to publiſh them, while ſecret things are ſtill to be left with him, till time ſhall declare them. Though it cannot but be bitter to the ſouls of true believers to think of the ſevere perſecutions which the church is to expect under the reign of antichriſt; yet what a ſoftening to that grief; what an encouragement to faith and patience; and what a pleaſure muſt it be, to have realizing proſpects of the care that Chriſt will take of them during their tribulations, and of the happy period he will put, in his appointed time, to all their ſorrows, when they ſhall be turned into joy and praiſe, and his kingdom ſhall be built up in its purity and glory, with wide extent upon the ruins of all antichriſtian powers! Then, as the Angel of the covenant ſwore by the Creator of all worlds, who lives for ever and ever, the myſtery of God, relating to his diſpenſations of providence and grace, ſhall be finiſhed; and all the prophecies, which are now the objects of the faith and hope of his people, ſhall be clearly explained, and actually fulfilled, to his glory and their everlaſting triumph.

CHAP.

NOTE.

* It is well known to *grammarians*, *regimen*, it is tranſlated *over* and *upon*, that the *prepoſition* (επι) with a *dative* as in *Luke* xv. 7. *over one ſinner*, (επι caſe, as it is here, and rendered *before*, επι αμαρτωλω) and *Eph.* ii. 20. *upon the* often ſignifies *concerning*; and, in that *foundation*. (επι τω θεμελιω)

CHAP. XI.

The first general description of the state of the church for 1260 *years, to be dated from the rise of the temporal power of the Pope about the year* 756, *is represented under the figure of a temple measured, but the outward court of which, as descriptive of formal professors, is left to the* Gentiles, *or idolatrous church of* Rome, *for* 42 *months,* 1, 2. *During this time of equal date with* 1260 *prophetic days, or years, two witnesses, or a few, from age to age, prophecy in sackcloth, but with great power,* 3,—6. *They are slain by popish tyranny, which is figured out under the image of the beast, and are in a manner suppressed for three prophetic days and a half, equal to the* 42 *months; after which they arise and ascend to heaven, as bearing their testimony with greater efficacy and honour than ever before, unto the overthrow of a tenth part of the* Romish *jurisdiction, and the slaughter of* 7000 *men, and to the consternation of the rest of that party, which puts an end to the second woe,* 7,—14.; *And under the seventh trumpet, denouncing the third woe, all antichristian powers would be utterly destroyed, and issue in a glorious state of Christ's kingdom upon earth,* 15,—19.

PERIOD III.

TEXT.

AND there was given me a reed like unto a rod: and the angel stood, saying, Rise, and measure the temple of God, and the altar, and them that worship therein.

PARAPHRASE.

THEN, in order to my having a general view of the true state both of the pure and the antichristian-church, methought, a reed was put into my hand, answering to the measuring rod, and line, which the prophets, *Ezekiel* and *Zechariah*, saw in vision for measuring the temple and *Jerusalem*, (Ezek. xl. 3,—5. and Zech. ii. 1, 2.) And the Angel of the covenant, who had given me *the open little book*, (chap. x. 8, &c.) standing near, said unto me, Arise, and with this rod, which is a proper emblem of the holy scripture, as the rule by which all persons, doctrines, and practices are to be tried, (*Isa.* viii. 20. and *Gal.* vi. 16.) take the just dimensions of the true gospel-church, which is now the temple of God, as his habitation through the Spirit: (1 *Cor.* iii. 16, 17. and 2 *Cor.* vi. 16. and *Eph.* ii. 21, 22.) Measure likewise the altar, at which they, as *a spiritual house and holy priesthood, offer up spiritual sacrifices* of prayer and praise, *acceptable to God by Jesus Christ:* (1 Pet. ii. 5.) And he further ordered me to take an exact account of those of the visible church, who worship God in spirit and truth, through Christ as their altar, according to gospel institution.

2 But the court which is without the

2 But though the whole temple at *Jerusalem* was measured, because all its parts were to be entirely rebuilt;

the temple, leave out, and meaſure it not; for it is given unto the Gentiles: and the holy city ſhall they tread under foot forty *and* two months.

built; yet, ſaid the Angel unto me (alluding to the outward court of that temple, (*Ezek.* xl. 17.) where all *Iſrael* worſhipped promiſcuouſly) You ſhall not take in the whole of the viſible church in your meaſurement; but ſhall leave out ſuch as do not agree to this rule: Thereby intimating, that formal profeſſors, who anſwer to outward court-worſhippers, ſhould not be reckoned to the true church of Chriſt, as being rejected of him: For, ſaid he, that part of the viſible church is permitted, by the righteous judgment of God, to fall under the power of antichriſtian *Rome;* which might fitly be ſtyled the *Gentiles*, as their idolatrous worſhip of ſaints, angels, and images, would reſemble the demon-worſhip of the heathens, and as many others of their religious ſervices would be derived from, and ſymbolize with them: And theſe *Gentilizing* Chriſtians, as he further added, ſhall not only trample upon, oppreſs, and perſecute the pure church, but alſo exerciſe a tyrannical dominion over all profeſſors of the Chriſtian name, even as it was foretold that *Jeruſalem* itſelf, the once holy city, ſhould *be broken down of the* Gentiles: (Luke xxi. 24. ſee the note there) And the continuance of their power ſhall be for the ſpace of twelve hundred and ſixty years, * which, in the ſtyle of prophecy, are denoted by forty and two months, reckoning each month at thirty days, and each day for a year. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.)

3 And I will give *power* unto my two witneſſes, and they ſhall prophecy a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days clothed in ſackcloth.

3 But, notwithſtanding all the degeneracy and oppreſſions of the Romiſh church, I will raiſe up, give commiſſion and authority to, and powerfully preſerve and aſſiſt a competent, though ſmall number of faithful ſervants, to bear an honourable witneſs to my name and goſpel, and the purity of my inſtitutions, in their preaching, holy profeſſion, and converſation, and to remonſtrate againſt the idolatry and other groſs corruptions

NOTE.

* This 1260 years, as Mr. *Lowman* has obſerved, and I think ſhewn with ſtrong probability in his *Preface*, and in the *Contents* of this third period, "is not to begin till the imperial government of *Rome* was paſſed away, as the preceding forms of government were before it, till another form of government ſhould be eſtabliſhed in *Rome*, which, on ſome accounts, ſhould be called the *ſeventh*, and other accounts the *eighth* form of government: when *Rome*, once the powerful miſtreſs of the world, after ſhe had loſt her dominion, and ſeemed to loſe it without hope of recovery, ſhould be reſtored to power and empire again, which was to continue during the 1260 days of this period, and then to be utterly overthrown, and never to riſe again."—— "Now, (ſays he) as a great variety of concurring circumſtances ſhew the beginning of this period about the year 756, when the Popes were inveſted with the temporal dominion of *Rome*, in which only time, the ſeveral deſcriptions do all exactly agree; the 1260 days of this prophecy are to laſt ſo long as this power is to continue: Which ſeems evidently to ſhew, that we are not to underſtand 1260 *natural* days, the time of this period, but ſo many *prophetic* days, in which a day is given for a year."

ruptions of that apostate church, in a succession of them from age to age; * which may be called *two witnesses*, with reference to the validity of their testimony to establish the truth of what they declare; (see *Deut.* xvii. 6. and xix. 15. *Matth.* xviii. 16. and 2 *Cor.* xiii. 1.) and with an allusion to some famous pairs of prophets in former days: And these shall continue to bear a noble testimony to me and my cause through the whole term of antichrist's reign, which will be twelve hundred and sixty days, reckoning each day for a year; and so will be exactly the same period, but now signified (*ver.* 2.) by *forty and two months*. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.) In all which time, as the ancient prophets and people of God used to wear sackcloth, in token of mourning and lamentation, in the days of *Israel*'s affliction; so, in allusion thereunto, these faithful servants shall bravely maintain their testimony in circumstances as distressed and perilous, and with hearts as deeply affected at the low and degenerate state of religion, and at the afflictive condition of the people of God under the power of persecutions, as though they were to manifest it by clothing themselves with sackcloth.

4 These are the two olive-trees, and the two candlesticks standing before the God of the earth.

4 These, how much soever they may be despised and oppressed by the apostate church, are in high honour and esteem with God; and as *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua* the high priest were compared to *two olive trees*, that fed the lamps of the temple with oil, on account of their employing all their wisdom, gifts, and graces, with which they were richly furnished, for rebuilding the temple, and re-establishing the worship of God in it, under the influence of the Spirit of the Lord; (*Zech.* iv. 6,—14.) so these witnesses in sackcloth, shall be continually supplied with the light and assistances of the Spirit to enable them, amidst all their trials, to minister the pure uncorrupted gospel, for the edification and comfort of the church, and for holding forth the light of truth and holiness to the world, like candles set on candlesticks, (*Matth.* v. 14,—16.) as

NOTE.

* These *two witnesses* mean, not any *two particular persons*, but a *succession* of faithful ministers: For their *prophesying* or *preaching* in sackcloth was to last 1260 years; and their being spoken of, as *two*, may well be considered with respect to *the sufficiency* of their witness-bearing, and in allusion to *Moses*, and *Aaron*, the deliverers of the children of *Israel* out of *Egypt*, and revivers of the worship of God among them; to *Elijah* and *Elisha*, the restorers of his worship from *Baal*'s idolatry; and to *Zerubbabel* and *Joshua*, the rebuilders of the temple; all which persons seem to be referred to, *ver.* 4, 5, 6. And, perhaps, it may point to some remarkable pairs of witnesses against popish corruptions, that should arise in a succession of them, during this period; such as the *Albigenses* and *Waldenses*; *John Huss* and *Jerom* of *Prague*: *Luther* and *Calvin*, and the like.

as becomes servants standing in the presence of the sovereign Lord of the whole earth, to minister before him, with a consciousness of his observing them, and with an humble dependence on him for protection, assistance, and success.

5 And if any man will hurt them, fire proceedeth out of their mouth, and devoureth their enemies: and if any man will hurt them, he must in this manner be killed.

5 And if any, through inveterate prejudices against them and their doctrine, shall set themselves to injure and distress them, and put an end to their testimony, as *Ahaziah* did in the case of *Elijah*, when to seize him, he sent two companies of soldiers, which were consumed by fire from heaven, in answer to his prayer, and in vindication of his righteous cause; (2 *Kings* i. 10,—12.) the word of the Lord, in the mouth of these two faithful witnesses, shall be like fire to devour their enemies, (*Jer.* v. 12, 14.) as God will hear their prayers under oppression, and will certainly avenge them, in due season, by executing the just judgments they shall denounce in their ministry, by his authority, against their antichristian-persecutors: And if, notwithstanding all the solemn warnings that shall be given, they will still persist in abusing them and obstructing their good work, they shall sooner or later, in the manner but now mentioned, find the dreadful effects of it to their own destruction; which is repeated, like the doubling of *Pharaoh*'s dream, because the thing is certain. (*Gen.* xli. 32.)

6 These have power to shut heaven, that it rain not in the days of their prophecy: and have power over the waters to turn them to blood, and to smite the earth with all plagues, as often as they will.

6 As the prophet *Elijah* had power with God by prayer, in a time of drought and famine, to stop the bottles of heaven, according to his prediction, that rain might not descend for the space of three years and six months to make the earth fruitful; (1 *Kings* xvii. 1. and *Jam.* v. 17.) and as *Moses* and *Aaron* received authority from God to turn the waters of *Egypt* into blood, (*Exod.* vii. 17.) and to inflict any other plague on that oppressive and persecuting people, which a divine order directed them to: So these witness-bearing servants were represented to me, as being so dear to God, and having such an interest in him by the prayer of faith, as, during the course of their prophesying, to denounce against, and bring down upon their cruel antichristian-enemies, such terrible punishments of a temporal and spiritual nature, whether by war or famine, or with-holding the rain of his word, Spirit, and providential bounties, as often as he sees fit to order them to denounce either of those judgments against the subjects of the Romish dominion: And this he authorised them to do, with effect upon them, for their obstinate wickedness, not from a spirit of private revenge, but for the vindication of his own honour, and of the faithfulness and importance of their testimony.

7 And when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony, the beaſt that aſcendeth out of the bottomleſs pit, ſhall make war againſt them, and ſhall overcome them, and kill them.

7 And during the time of their witneſs-bearing, till they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony in ſackcloth, to Chriſt and his goſpel, and againſt all antichriſtian-errors in doctrine and worſhip, through the forty and two months, or twelve hundred and ſixty years, the papal tyranny, or grand antichriſt, which was repreſented to me under the figure of a wild beaſt, (το θηριον, ſee alſo *chap.* xiii. 1. and xvii. 8.) the ſame that was foretold by *the fourth beaſt* in *Daniel*'s prophecy, (*chap.* vii. 23,—25.) and derives his power from Satan, like one that riſes up from the horrid unfathomable abyſs of hell: This cruel beaſt, *whoſe coming will be after the working of Satan*, (2 Theſſ. ii. 9.) will make a furious oppoſition to my witneſſes, and will be ſuffered to prevail, by ſtratagem and violence, for a time, againſt them, and deprive them of their civil and religious liberties, and make great ſlaughter of them *.

8 And

NOTE.

* Many learned expoſitors underſtand this *ſlaying of the witneſſes*, to relate to ſome more than commonly ſevere perſecutions of the church, for three prophetic days or years and a half, (*ver.* 9.) toward the cloſe of the 1260 years of antichriſt's reign, and of the witneſſes prophefying in ſackcloth. But they are much divided in their conjectures about *the time* of this event, whether it be already paſt, or yet to come. They, who ſuppoſe it to be already paſt, refer it to very different inſtances of ſevere perſecutions, which continued only three years and a half. Some carry it ſo far back, as to the council of *Conſtance*, about the year 1414, when *John Huſs* and *Jerome* of *Prague* were put to death; others refer it to the *Smalcaldic* war in *Germany*, about 1547; others, to the Popiſh perſecution in Queen *Mary*'s days in *England*, about the year 1553; others, to the the maſſacre of the Proteſtants in *France*, 1572; and others, to the cruelties exerciſed on the *Vaudois* in *Piedmont*, under the Duke of *Savoy*, about 1685: All which remarkable perſecutions laſted about *three years and a half*. And ſeveral of theſe expoſitors ſuppoſe, though not very conſiſtently with their own ſchemes, that *the reſurrection of the witneſſes* was at the time of the *Proteſtant Reformation*; whereas moſt of the facts, to which they apply the *ſlaying of the witneſſes*, were after the Reformation commenced: Others of them, who alſo take the three *days* and a half (*ver.* 9.) to ſignify in prophetic ſtyle three *years* and a half, think, that the *ſlaying of the witneſſes*, and conſequently their *riſing* and *aſcending* is ſtill to come toward *the cloſe* of the 1260 years, or 42 months of their prophefying in ſackcloth: For they apprehend that the witneſſes are not yet riſen, and advanced to ſo great power and honour as is ſignified by their *ſtanding on their feet* and *aſcending up to heaven*; and that no ſuch blow has hitherto been given to Popery, as is repreſented to be the immediate conſequence of their *riſing* and *aſcending*. All this ſhews the extreme uncertainty that attends every gueſs about the *ſlaying*, *riſing*, and *aſcending* of the witneſſes, upon the foot of underſtanding, the *three days and a half* to mean only *three years and a half*. But all theſe controverſies about it are effectually ſuperſeded, if (as ſeems to me moſt likely) we reſolve the three days and a half into prophetic days of years, and then the three years and a half into an agreement with *the time, and times*, and *half a time*, in this book, (*chap* xii. 14.) and in *Daniel*'s prophecy, (*chap.* xii. 6, 7) and ſo make them equal to the prophetic 42 *months* and 1260 *days*. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.) This makes the general deſcriptions of this period entirely uniform: And the words *when they ſhall have finiſhed their teſtimony* (οταν τελεσωσι) may, according to the latitude of the *tenſe* and *particle*, ſignify, *while they are*, or *ſhall be performing their teſtimony*: For (οταν) *when* ſometimes ſignifies *while*, as in *Matth.* xxiv. 32.; and

8 And their dead bodies *shall lie* in the street of the great city, which spiritually is called Sodom and Egypt, where also our Lord was crucified.

8 And as it is the highest instance of mercilefs barbarity, to deny dead bodies a burial, and leave them shamefully expofed in public places of concourfe; fo, to fhew the moft malignant inhumanity and indignity againft thefe witneffes, they will not only be flain, in a political, and many of them in a literal fenfe; but will be expofed to open contempt and ignominy in the popifh dominion, which is of large extent, and has for its capital the great city of *Rome;* (chap. xvi. 19. and xvii. 18. and xviii. 10,—16, 18, 21.) which in a myftical fenfe may be called *Sodom*, for its pride, filthinefs, and wickednefs, and *Egypt*, for its tyranny, oppreffion, and idolatry; and may be compared to *Jerufalem*, which killed the prophets, and, when under the *Roman* jurifdiction, put our bleffed Lord to the fhameful and painful death of the crofs, and afterward crucified him afrefh in the martyrdom of his members, which will be acted over again by thefe cruel perfecutors.

9 And they of the people, and kindreds, and tongues, and nations, fhall fee their dead bodies, three days and an half, and fhall not fuffer their dead bodies to be put in graves.

9 And this will be counted fuch a triumph of the antichriftian power over the faints,* that the fubjects of its dominion, wherefoever they dwell, in different countries of various tribes, languages, and nations, will barbarouffy inful over them, as feeing them expofed, with as much ignominy, abhorrence, and inhumanity, as though they were loathfome carcafes kept above ground, and not fuffered to be decently interred, during the period of their prophefying in fackcloth, which may be called three days and a half, in allufion to the time that unburied dead bodies may ordinarily be kept, without offenfive putrefaction, and which in prophetic ftyle is anfwerable to *a time, times, and half a time*, another prophetic number, parallel to *forty and two months*, or *twelve hundred and fixty days*. (See the note on *ver.* 7.)

10 And they that dwell upon the

10 And the inhabitants of the papal territories will be mightily pleafed at the inhuman treatment of

NOTES.

and *finifhed* is rendered *performed*, Luke ii. 39.——But if, as fome fuppofe, the words may be rendered, *When they fhall be about to finifh their teftimony*, or toward the clofe of the period for the witneffes prophefying in fackcloth, which I apprehend is not yet expired, then this *flaying them* muft ftill be to come. And it feems not improbable but that the laft efforts of antichriftian powers may be the moft terrible and prevalent of all that have gone before it fince the Reformation.

* Some by *the people, that fhould fee their dead bodies, and not fuffer them to be put in graves*, underftand their *kind Proteftant friends*, who would not fuffer them to be buried, in hopes of their reviving again. But it feems more fuitable to the following verfe, and the whole tenor of this general defcription of the *mournful ftate* of the witneffes, while prophefying in fackcloth, to underftand it as meaning their barbarous *popifh enemies:* And yet it muft be owned, that the other fenfe fuggefts great encouragement to the church under all their fuffering circumftances, on fuppofition that it is to be confined to times after the *Reformation.*

the earth ſhall rejoice over them, and make merry, and ſhall ſend gifts one to another; becauſe theſe two prophets tormented them that dwelt on the earth.

the ſlain witneſſes; and, as though the day were now abſolutely their own, will congratulate one another, and go into all ſorts of merriment and feaſting, and *ſending portions one to another, and gifts to the poor*, as if, like the day of the *Jews* deliverance from their enemies, (*Eſth.* ix. 22.) this were to be obſerved as a time of thankſgiving to God; becauſe they had brought down the faithful monitors, that filled the ſubjects of the antichriſtian-empire with intolerable vexation, by teſtifying both openly and practically, by preaching and example, againſt their abominable corruptions in doctrine, worſhip, and manners; and by denouncing the judgments of God, which would come upon them, on that account.

11 And after three days and an half, the Spirit of life from God entred into them: and they ſtood upon their feet, and great fear fell upon them which ſaw them.

11 But in vain will they imagine themſelves ſecure from being ever troubled again with a revival of the cauſe, which they thought was ſo thoroughly ſuppreſſed, as to be paſt all likelihood of recovery: For, after the expiration of the above-mentioned period, which, though conſiſting of twelve hundred and ſixty years, may, in a way of computing prophetic numbers, be expreſſed, as it has been but now, (*ver.* 9.) by three days and an half, (ſee the note on *ver.* 7.) Methought I ſaw the quickning Spirit, which, proceeding from God, entered into, raiſed up, and animated a ſucceſſion of faithful witneſſes to this ſame glorious cauſe, of the ſame principles and temper with thoſe that had gone before them, as *John* the *Baptiſt* came in the ſpirit and power of *Elias*, and for that reaſon bore his name: (*Luke* i. 17. and *Matth.* xi. 14. and xvii. 11, 12.) And they ſtood with ſtrength, courage, and vigour, on their feet, like perſons raiſed in full health from the dead, and ready to engage in any ſervice that God ſhould call them to, as *Iſrael*'s reſtoration was repreſented in *Ezekiel*'s viſion under the figure of a *reſurrection* of dry bones, and of their ſtanding upon their feet. (*Chap.* xxxvii. 1,—10.) And, at their enemies ſeeing this unexpected wonderful alteration, they were terribly afraid of being tormented by theſe witneſſes, more than ever before.

12 And they heard a great voice from heaven, ſaying unto them, Come up hither. And they aſcended up to heaven in a cloud, and their enemies beheld them.

12 And for the further encouragement of theſe riſen witneſſes, methought, I heard a loud voice call to them from heaven, the throne of God's glory, ſaying, Come up hither; by which was ſignified, that God would viſibly take them into his ſpecial protection, and would aſſiſt, own, and honour them with great ſucceſs in his work and cauſe: And thereupon, methought, in alluſion to Chriſt's viſible aſcenſion to heaven in a cloud after his reſurrection from the dead, they aſcended up to heaven in the midſt of a bright cloud,

cloud, to signify God's exalting them to eminent dignity, power, and prosperity, according to the metaphorical sense, in which the scripture uses such terms; (*Isa.* xiv. 13. and *Matth.* xi. 23.) and their enemies could not but see what a glorious change was made in their circumstances, and what a signal testimony of favour and honour God had therein given to them.

13 And at the same hour was there a great earthquake, and the tenth part of the city fell, and in the earthquake were slain of men seven thousand: and the remnant were affrighted, and gave glory to the God of heaven.

13 And, at the very same time, there were strong convulsions and confusions in the civil and ecclesiastical affairs of the antichristian nations, which were represented under the emblem of a great earthquake, like that which attended the resurrection of our Lord; (*Matth.* xxviii. 2.) and by means thereof a very considerable body which may be called a tenth part of the papal jurisdiction, fell off from it *. And, in the midst of these commotions, a great number of their party, like seven thousand men of name, power, and influence, (ονόματα ανθρώπων) together with their dependents, fell in battle: And the remainder of them were astonished and terrified, and forced to own, to the glory of the only true God, whose throne is established in heaven, that there was an extraordinary appearance of his power and providence in favour of his church, and against his popish enemies; and by means of preaching the gospel, in concurrence with his Spirit and his amazing providence, they were converted from superstition and idolatry, to the glory of God, in an acknowledgment of the truth, as it is in Jesus.

14 The second wo is past, *and* behold, the third wo cometh quickly.

14 This brings us to the end of the *second* great wo, that had been threatned by the *sixth* angel: (*chap.* ix. 13, *&c.*) And observe, with attention and reverend awe, the *third* and *last* wo will be immediately denounced by the *seventh* angel.

15 And the seventh angel sounded, and there were great

TRUMPET VII. being the *third* and *last wo-trumpet.*

15 Then the *seventh* angel blew his trumpet, which was to be followed with effusions of the

NOTE.

* The account given in the paraphrase of the *tenth part of the city*, and *seven thousand men*, as meaning a considerable part of the *Romish jurisdiction* and *principal men* in it, appears to me as probable, as any of the numerous conjectures that have been made about it. Some fix upon one, and others upon another of the ten kingdoms, into which the Western empire was divided, after it became antichristian. But, as far I see, we must wait for *the event* to determine it, since this part of the general view of the prophecy seems to be not yet fulfilled: And the same may be said with respect to the sentiments of others, who think that by the *tenth part of the city*, is meant *Rome* itself, which is now but a tenth part of what it was at the time of this prophecy. But be these guesses as they will, I take the tenth part of the city's *falling*, and seven thousand being *slain*, to signify some very great downfal of popish powers, that is immediately to succeed the 1260 years of the beast's reign, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth, and to be completed by the pouring out of the seven vials under the *seventh trumpet*: (chap. xvi) For the numbers *seven* and *ten* are often used to signify *many*, as in *Job.* v. 19. *Psal.* lxxix. 12. *Luke* xvii. 4. *Gen.* xxxi. 7. 1 *Sam.* i. 8. and *Eccles.* vii. 19.

great voices in heaven, saying, The kingdoms of this world are become *the kingdoms* of our Lord, and of his Christ, and he shall reign for ever and ever.

the *seven vials*, (chap. xvi.) that would bring about the entire ruin of the antichristian-state of *Rome;* and, immediately upon this notice of it, there were loud acclamations of joy and praise among the witnesses that ascended up to heaven, (*ver.* 12.) saying, Now the long-looked for, and earnestly desired time is come, in which all the kingdoms of this world, and particularly those that had been under antichrist's dominion before, are brought into a spiritual, chearful, and holy subjection, as nations devoted to God and to his Messiah; they being made a willing people in the day of his power: And he, who has set up his throne in great glory among them, shall rule over them by his word, Spirit, providence, and sceptre of righteousness, as their King; and he shall reign in this manner upon earth, till the utmost period of this glorious dispensation, and afterwards under a different form, in heaven, together with his Father and Spirit, to all eternity.

16 And the four and twenty elders which sat before God on their seats, fell upon their faces, and worshipped God,

17 Saying, We give thee thanks, O Lord God Almighty, which art, and wast, and art to come; because thou hast taken to thee thy great power, and hast reigned.

16, 17 And, upon hearing these glad tidings of great joy, the four and twenty elders, or representatives of the church, which were seated with honour, dignity, and delight on their thrones in the immediate presence of God, (*chap.* iv. 4.) rose from their seats; and, prostrating themselves with deep humility and reverence, paid their solemn adorations to God the Son, together with the Father, * saying, We bless thy holy and glorious name, and pay our chearful and grateful acknowledgments to thee, O thou eternal and almighty Jehovah, the sovereign Lord of all, and, together with thy Father, the only true God, (see the notes on *chap.* i. 4, 8.) who from everlasting to everlasting art unchangeably the same in thy being and perfections, counsels, appointments, and covenant, as God; and art *the same yesterday, and to-day, and for ever*, as Mediator; (*Heb.* xiii. 8.) We solemnly adore and praise thee; because thou hast now eminently assumed and asserted thy natural and office-right and authority, to exercise universal dominion for the good of thy church; and hast reigned, by thy providential dispensations, with great power and righteousness over all thine enemies; and, by thy grace, over all thy people in the most conspicuous, effectual, and extensive manner.

18 And

NOTE.

* I think that all the following descriptions of the divine Person here spoken of, may, in an especial manner, point out to us the Lord Christ, as most immediately intended in this ascription of glory, though not to the exclusion of the eternal Father, to whom, together with the Son, the kingdoms of this world will be brought into subjection, when Christ shall *take to himself his great power and reign;* which seems most evidently to be spoken of, by way of eminence, as the time of his glorious kingdom upon the earth.

18 And the nations were angry, and thy wrath is come, and the time of the dead that they ſhould be judged, and that thou ſhouldſt give reward unto thy ſervants the prophets, and to the ſaints, and them that fear thy name, ſmall and great; and ſhouldſt deſtroy them which deſtroy the earth.

18 And we bleſs thy divine majeſty, that though the nations, which were ſubject to antichriſtian-powers, were enraged againſt, and cruelly perſecuted thy witneſſes, and were filled with indignation at thy appearing for their reſcue; yet their glorious cauſe is now judged; thy righteous vengeance is executed upon thoſe that oppreſſed them, and repented not of their evil deeds; and thy appointed time, the ſet-time for favouring Sion, is now come, that thou ſhouldſt avenge the quarrel of thy covenant in reviving, owning, and honouring thoſe, who in a civil ſenſe were dead, and in vindicating the characters of thy holy martyrs who were faithful unto death; and that thou ſhouldſt beſtow gracious rewards of full liberty, peace and proſperity, in the enjoyment of all goſpel-ordinances and privileges, upon thy miniſtring ſervants, who in their own perſons, or in their predeceſſors, or both, made known thy will, and preached thy pure goſpel, in mournful circumſtances, at the peril of their lives; and not upon them only but upon all thy people whom thou haſt ſet apart and ſanctified for thyſelf, and who worſhip thee with a reverential fear of thy holy name, whether they be weaker or ſtronger believers, or perſons of lower or higher rank and ſtation in the church, or in the world; and that thou ſhouldſt render tribulation to thoſe antichriſtian-enemies, who troubled them; and bring utter deſtruction upon thoſe, who in their day, by falſe doctrine, fraud, and violence, corrupted, plundered, and deſtroyed the inhabitants of the earth.

19 And the temple of God was opened in heaven, and there was ſeen in his temple the ark of his teſtament: and there were lightnings, and voices, and thunderings, and an earthquake, and great hail.

19 And as the temple at *Jeruſalem*, which was the ſeat of public worſhip, and a type of the New Teſtament-church, appeared in all its glory, when the veil was turned aſide to give an open view of the holy of holies, and of the ark of the covenant, with the mercy-ſeat and cherubim upon it, which were emblems of the divine preſence; ſo I had a viſion of the temple, and all things in it, as expoſed to my ſight, without the interpoſition of a veil, to intimate the exceeding light, liberty, and glory, with which God's ſpiritual temple, his church on earth, ſhould appear in this happy ſtate of it: And this glorious revolution was repreſented to me, as attended with ſuch heavy and deſtructive judgments upon the enemies of Chriſt and his church, as may fitly be compared to the moſt terrible tempeſts of lightning, and roarings in the air, and claps of thunder; and to the ſhocks, overthrows, and ruins of a univerſal earthquake, and ſtorms of prodigious hail ſtones, as if the diſſolution of all things were at hand.

RECOL-

RECOLLECTIONS.

How certainly may we conclude, that the wickedness of the wicked shall have an end, and that God will establish the just! When he appropriates a peculiar people to himself, according to the rule of his word, he will separate the precious from the vile, and make no account of carnal professors, whom he will leave to the power of antichristian enemies: But he will always have a seed to serve him, and bear witness to him and his gospel, though in mournful circumstances, like persons clothed in sackcloth, through the whole period of popish tyranny, superstition, and idolatry, which was to last twelve hundred and sixty years. His faithful witnesses, shall, nevertheless, stand all that while with acceptance before him, and be the means of conveying light and influence in the true church of Christ. But wo to those who, like antichristian-*Rome*, (which may well be compared to *Sodom* and *Egypt* for wickedness, persecution, and idolatry) set themselves against these witnesses, to oppress, silence, and slay them. God will take their part, and bring down heavy vengeance upon the heads of all their enemies: And though he may suffer them, for an appointed season, to be *politically*, and some of their number *corporally* slain, and their cause to be in great measure suppressed, by the beast which rose out of the bottomless pit; and to be treated with inhumanity and indignity under the jurisdiction of *Rome*, and insulted with mirth and triumph by multitudes of that party, which could not tell how to bear the stinging admonition and reproof of their holy doctrines, examples, prayers, and threatnings of divine judgments; they shall have a rising, ascending, and flourishing state of security and honour, by the power of God's Spirit, and the workings of his providence, to their own exceeding joy, and to the envy and vexation of their enemies And ah! How will many of their persecutors be then affrighted at the thought of what they have done against the faithful servants of the Lord, and at the desolation then coming upon themselves! Happy will it be for those, whose fright shall end in a thorough conversion, and in giving glory to God. And O what a blessed time will that be, when the power of popery shall be totally reduced, and the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ! Then the glorious privileges of the gospel-church shall open in light and liberty, purity and peace, in delightful communion with God, and in holiness of heart and life; and then their Lord and Saviour, who is the eternal and almighty God, together with the Father, will vindicate their righteous cause, and bountifully reward his suffering servants with the smiles of providence and grace; and will pour destruction upon all antichristian powers at the end of their twelve hundred and sixty years reign, who had been the plague of the earth: And this he will do by methods as terrible as the most shocking tempests of thunder, lightning, hail, and earthquakes, can possibly figure out to us. The hope of this complete deliverance of the church is their support and comfort in all preceding tribulations; and when Christ shall take to himself his great power and reign, to the entire destruction of his enemies, and happiness of them that love and fear him, then all his people on earth will join the heavenly chorus in animated thanksgivings and praises to him, who shall reign for ever and ever.

CHAP.

CHAP. XII.

A second general description of the same period of the church of Christ, and of the Popish empire, under the figures of a woman driven into the wilderness, but preserved in safety there, and of a great red dragon, meaning the devil, as exerting his power principally by the Pope and his party, who would persecute her 1260 *prophetic days or years,* 1,—6. Michael *and his angels fight against the devil and his angels, who are defeated; upon which there are loud acclamations of joy and praise, attended with a denunciation of wo to the inhabitants of the earth, by reason of the devil's or dragon's* rage, 7,—12. *Hereupon the dragon persecutes the church, which is hid from him, and is nourished for a time, times, and half a time, answering to* 1260 *prophetic days,* 13, 14. *He endeavours to destroy her, as by a flood which is swallowed up by some civil powers, styled the earth; and, being thus disappointed, he renews his war against the remnant of her seed,* 15,—17.

TEXT.

AND there appeared a great wonder in heaven, a woman clothed with the sun, and the moon under her feet, and upon her head a crown of twelve stars:

PARAPHRASE.

AND in another general view which was given me of the state of the church, and of its antichristian-enemies, for the space of twelve hundred and sixty years, there was represented to me a very remarkable significant figure (σημειον) in heaven, * portending great events: Which was of a woman most gloriously adorned, a fit emblem of Christ's church or spouse, as highly honoured of God: She appeared as surrounded with rays of illustrious brightness, like the sun; which may signify her having put on Christ and his righteousness, and being irradiated with the light of truth, comfort, and holiness, as derived from *the Sun of righteousness, which arose upon her, with healing in his wings:* (Malac. iv. 2.) And the moon was represented as placed under her feet; Which may be considered as an emblem of her elevation above the obscure light of Mosaic rites and ceremonies, and of her trampling, with holy indifference and contempt, upon all the enjoyments of this world, both of which are as changeable and deficient as the moon, that has no light but what it borrows from the sun. And there was the appearance of a crown upon her head, bespangled with twelve bright stars, instead of so many brilliant diamonds, to intimate, that all her light of knowledge and grace was communicated, as

a

NOTE.

* By *heaven* some understand *the place* where the apostle had his vision; others, *the air;* others, the *church,* which is the *kingdom of heaven* on earth. But, being uncertain in which of these senses it is to be taken, the paraphrase leaves it undetermined.

a crown of glory to her, by means of, and according to the doctrine of the twelve apostles.

2 And she being with child, cried, travailing in birth, and pained to be delivered.

2 And, methought, this wonderfully remarkable woman, appearing to be big with child, cried out, as in the throws and pangs of a woman in labour, just ready, and earnestly longing, to be delivered; * which in figurative language, (*Isa.* liv. 1. and lxvi. 7, 8, 9.) signifies the strong groanings, eager desires, wrestling prayers, and indefatigable labours of the church, under sharp persecutions, for a numerous offspring of converts, that *Christ*, in his doctrine and image, *might be formed in them*, (Gal. iv. 19.) and they might *be born of God.* (1 John v. 1, 4.)

3 And there appeared another wonder in heaven, and behold, a great red dragon, having seven heads, and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads.

3 And while the woman was in travail, I saw, in my vision, another significant sign of a contrary nature in heaven: (see the note on *ver.* 1.) And, behold! with wonder and amazement, it was the figure of a great red dragon, which represented the devil, (*ver.* 9.) as a powerful, cruel, and savage adversary, all over stained with the blood of martyrs, especially by popish instruments, to whom *he gave his power:* (chap. xiii. 2.) Accordingly the dragon, as acting in and by them, was represented to me under the form of a strange monster, with seven heads and ten horns, and seven crowns upon his heads; by which may be signified the Pope, as invested with temporal, as well as spiritual empire, whose seat would be at *Rome*, which stands upon seven mountains; and whose dominion would be the seventh form of supreme government; (*chap.* xvii. 9,—12.) † and who would have a

NOTES.

* *Being with child* and *travailing in birth*, are beautiful figures, by which the church is represented in Scripture, as bringing forth a spiritual offspring: Accordingly *Jerusalem* is called *the mother of us all;* and, with a prophetic view to the glory of the gospel church, *Of Zion it shall be said, This and that man was born in her*, &c. (Psal. lxxxvii. 5, 6.) and, *as soon as Zion travailed, she brought forth her children.* (Isa. lxvi. 8.)

† The description of this *great red dragon* is so near a-kin to that which is given of *the beast*, chap. xiii. 1. and xvii. 9,—11. that one would think we could not easily miss of seeing the same power to be intended by both. (See the note on *chap.* xi. 2.) There is only one difference in these figurative representations of *the dragon*, and *the beast*, chap. xiii. 1. The dragon here appeared with *seven crowns on his seven heads*, and the beast there with *ten on his ten horns.* Perhaps, the reason of that variation may be, because while the heathen *Roman* empire subsisted, and, as such, persecuted the church, *Rome* alone had the imperial dignity, and the ten kingdoms were only provinces under her. But, when the empire became *antichristian*, those provinces were formed into distinct *kingdoms;* and so are represented as *crowned*, though still in a dependence on the Pope, *chap.* xvii. 9,—13. However, as the *crowns* and *horns* in both are emblems of *royal dignity and power;* and as seven is a *number of perfection*, and all the heads were *crowned*, the general meaning of the symbols is the same: But whatever difficulty there may be, in assigning any particular reason of this difference in the figurative representations, (which is of no great importance, while the general view is the same) all the heads being *crowned* is a considerable

a powerful rule, of which horns are an emblem, over the ten kingdoms into which the *Roman* empire would before that time be divided; and would exercise royal authority with great extent; the emblem of which are seven crowns set on these seven heads, to denote that all the power of the former governments of *Rome* would center in him.

4 And his tail drew the third part of the stars of heaven, and did cast them to the earth: and the dragon stood before the woman which was ready to be delivered, for to devour her child assoon as it was born.

4 And by means of his agents and followers, persecutions and corrupt doctrines, which for their power and malignity, may be compared to a great dragon's tail, this monster swept away a considerable number of ecclesiastical sons from their spiritual stations in the church, drawing them into superstition and idolatry, and throwing them down from a pursuit of heavenly views to an attachment to earthly things; such as the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world. And while the church was labouring with great difficulty and earnest desire, like a woman in travail, to propagate pure and undefiled religion, and make sincere converts to Christ, the furious dragon, who, as a *roaring lion, walks about, seeking whom he may devour*, (1 Pet. v. 8.) narrowly watched her, like one standing just before her, to see when she should bring forth her beloved offspring, that he might immediately tear it in pieces, as soon as ever it should be born into the world: Which may be considered as a lively figure of the implacable and powerful opposition of Satan, and of those that are under his influence, against the kingdom and gospel of Christ, to prevent their progress in the earth.

5 And she brought forth a man child, who was to rule all nations with a rod of iron: and her child was

5 And yet, according to the painful, laborious, and hopeful desires of the church, she brought forth a seed to serve Christ; which in prophetic style may be called her being *delivered of a man-child;* (Isa. vi. 7, 8.) * as a *succession* of faithful believers should

NOTES.

considerable objection against the common interpretation of the seven heads, as relating to the *seven forms of government*, that should succeed one another in the *Roman* empire; such as *kings*, *consuls*, *dictators*, *tribunes*, *decimvirs*, *emperors*, and *popes:* For I cannot find that the *consuls*, *dictators*, *tribunes*, and *decimvirs*, though supreme magistrates, were ever *crowned;* whereas our prophecy expressly exhibits *all* the seven heads as alike crowned; and the papal head over them may be considered as a seventh form of supreme government. (See the note on *chap.* xvii. 9.)

* By the *man-child*, which the church brought forth, interpreters generally understand *Constantine* the Great, who was exalted to the imperial throne, established Christianity, and ruled all nations with a rod of iron, unto the subduing of heathen persecution and idolatry, and utterly overthrowing the devil's tyranny, together with the idolatrous priests and persecutors among the *Pagans*. And, I confess, there seems to be something so natural in this, and in a correspondent interpretation of *ver.* 7, 8. that I should strongly incline to go into it, were it not that I cannot but take this, as well as the 11th and 13th chapters, to be a general representation of the state of the church, during the 1260 years of her being in the wilderness, and of anti-christ's

was caught up unto God, and *to* his throne.

be thereby propagated in the church, in ſpite of all the malicious deſigns and attempts of the devil and his inſtruments; inſomuch that, inſtead of its being utterly extirpated from the earth, it ſhould finally prevail, under Chriſt its head, to break to pieces all the powers of its enemies, and rule over them with invincible ſtrength and firmneſs, as with an iron-ſceptre: And, in the mean while, this lovely birth was taken under the immediate care and protection of God for its preſervation, like one raiſed above the reach of its moſt powerful and inveterate enemies, and lodged ſecretly as it were, before his throne in heaven; as *Joaſh* was hid in the temple of the Lord ſix years, that the idolatrous *Athaliah* might not murder him. (2 *Chron.* xxii. 11, 12. and xxiii. 11,—13.)

6 And the woman fled into the wilderneſs, where ſhe hath a place prepared of God, that they ſhould feed her there a thouſand two hundred *and* threeſcore days.

6 And the church herſelf, ſignified by the parent-woman, (*ver.* 1, 2.) was taken effectual care of, as well as thoſe that were *born* to God *in her, whom the Higheſt himſelf would eſtabliſh*, (Pſ. lxxxvii. 5, 6.) *and the gates of hell ſhould not prevail againſt*; (Matth. xvi. 18.) though, in order to her preſervation, ſhe was forced to retire into obſcurity, as into a wild and ſolitary deſart, expoſed to many difficulties and dangers, as *Iſrael* were in the wilderneſs, where God by his kind providence had prepared a place of retreat and refreſhment for them, that as he there fed them with *manna*; ſo his miniſtring ſervants ſhould *feed her with knowledge and underſtanding*, as *paſtors according to his own heart*, (Jer. iii. 15.) for the whole ſpace of his witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth, which was to be twelve hundred and ſixty years. (See the notes on *chap.* x. 6. and xi. 3.)

7 And there was war in heaven; Michael

7 And a further repreſentation was made to me of the ſtate of the church, during this period, under the emblem

NOTE.

chriſt's reign. (See the notes on *chap.* x. 6. and xi. 7.) But as upon every ſcheme, except that of *Grotius* and *Hammond*, (which evidently gives by far too ſhort a time for the numerous events aſſigned to this period) all Proteſtants muſt allow that *Conſtantine*'s reign was long before this period commenced; and as the prophetic language is all *figurative*, it ſeems requiſite, for making the general compendious view in this and the preceding and following chapters uniform, to give thoſe figurative repreſentations ſuch a turn as may beſt comport with the events that were to come to paſs in the time marked out by the propheſy itſelf, relating to the 1260 years, or *time, times, and half a time*, of the church's being in the wilderneſs, *ver.* 6. 14. Otherwiſe, I cannot conceive why theſe numbers are mentioned in this chapter at all; nor why *the dragon* is repreſented as having *ten horns*, and *ſeven heads and crowns*, ver. 3. (See the note there) I have therefore fixed upon ſuch an application of events in this chapter as is entirely conſiſtent with the two other general views of this period, that are given in the two chapters between which this ſtands. And though, as far as I know, my thoughts upon it may be in great meaſure ſingular; yet they lie eaſy before my mind, and are humbly ſubmitted to the judgment of the reader.

Michael and his angels fought against the dragon, and the dragon fought and his angels,

emblem of a terrible war figured out by one in the air *; wherein *Michael*, the sovereign prince, lord, and head of the angels, (*Dan.* xii. 1. and *Jude*, ver. 9.) and his servants, whether ministring spirits, or gospel-preachers, engaged in battle against the great dragon or the devil; and this furious enemy exerted all his power at the head of, and in conjunction with, his demons in hell, and his emissaries, false teachers, and their followers on earth, in opposition to them.

8 And prevailed not, neither was their place found any more in heaven.

8 And the issue of the combat was, that the dragon and his forces could not carry their point for destroying them; so far from it, that they were absolutely defeated in that design, and lost all their authority in the true church of Christ, as being overcome by their faith and patience, and by the breakings out of the light of the gospel; which might point to *the Protestant-reformation*, when the gospel had a wonderful spread, and several states and kingdoms threw off the antichristian yoke.

9 And the great dragon was cast out, that old serpent, called the devil and Satan, which deceiveth the whole world: he was cast out into the earth, and his angels were cast out with him.

9 And the great dragon himself, at the head of his formidable army, was turned out of the dominion which he before had assumed over those vassals that were now delivered out of his kingdom, who, as long ago as the fall of the human race, beguiled *Eve*, through his subtilty, under the form of a serpent; (*Gen.* iii. 4. and 2 *Cor.* xi. 3.) who is often called in scripture *the devil*, and, according to the signification of that word, is a malicious and false *accuser of the brethren*, (ver. 10.) and is properly styled *Satan*, who, as that name signifies, is an inveterate and implacable adversary to them; and by his serpentine craft, betrays the carnal people of all nations into error and idolatry, and every other kind of abominable evil: This malicious and powerful adversary had a great downfal in my vision, like one who tumbles headlong from heaven to earth; and his agents and emissaries, as acting under his influence, were cast down from their former power and authority with him; Thereby intimating that Christ and his church, in the days of *the Reformation*, should prevail against the devil and all his instruments, notwithstanding the subtle and furious opposition that would then be made by

NOTE.

* *In heaven*, I here take to mean the *aerial heaven;* because the devil is styled *the prince of the power of the air*, (Eph. ii. 2.) and the apostle speaks vi. 12.) of *spiritual wickedness in high* or *heavenly places.* (επερανιοις) But this may be considered as emblematical of the combats that are carried on by Christ (who, as many good expositors understand it, is signified by *Michael*) and his people, on one hand; and by Satan and his popish adherents, on the other. Or, perhaps, by *heaven* here, and in *ver.* 8, 10. may be meant *the church of Christ* on earth.

by antichriſtian powers againſt the reformed religion among them.

10 And I heard a loud voice, ſaying in heaven, Now is come ſalvation, and ſtrength, and the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Chriſt: for the accuſer of our brethren is caſt down, which accuſed them before our God day and night,

10 Hereupon, methought, I heard a loud acclamation of melodious thankſgiving, joy, and praiſe in the heavenly aſſembly, with which the church on earth chearfully joined, ſaying, Now is a time of great deliverance to the true church of Chriſt from its idolatrous and perſecuting enemies, and of its proſperity and ſafety; now has God ſhewn himſelf ſtrong on behalf of his people; and now is the goſpel-kingdom of our God highly exalted in the light and purity of its doctrines and inſtitutions; and now the power and authority (ἐξουσία) of his Meſſiah, as King of kings and Lord of lords, is ſet up and manifeſted in great glory: For the devil, that grand adverſary of the Chriſtian brethren, is dethroned and defeated in his deſigns, who ſought all opportunities, by his inſtruments, of laying crimes to their charge, which they were innocent of, to furniſh their antichriſtian enemies with unjuſt pretences for oppreſſing them; and who was ſo inſolent as, ſpeaking after the manner of man, unweariedly to bring falſe accuſations of them, on all occaſions, by day and night, before our reconciled God, to try whether he could not provoke his wrath againſt them, as he attempted to do againſt his ſervant *Job*, (chaps. i. ii.) and againſt *Joſhua* the high prieſt. (*Zech.* iii. 1.) For all this ſignal victory, we exult and triumph, and glorify the name of the Lord.

11 And they overcame him by the blood of the Lamb, and by the word of their teſtimony; and they loved not their lives unto the death.

11 And we chearfully adore and bleſs him, in reflection that his ſaints have gained this glorious conqueſt over their great adverſary, the devil, as working by popiſh powers; which they have done, not by any ſtrength or wiſdom of their own, but merely through faith in the blood of the Lamb, who was ſlain, and offered up himſelf an atoning ſacrifice for them; and by means of *the ſword of the Spirit, which is the word of God*, (Eph. vi. 17.) through their ſtedfaſt adherence to it, dependence upon it, and open profeſſion of it, in its uncorrupted purity, which they faithfully bore witneſs to, in their doctrine and converſation: And ſo bold and upright were they in their holy profeſſion of Chriſt and his pure goſpel, that they valued not their lives, in any compariſon with him and his cauſe; but, like the apoſtle *Paul*, (Acts xx. 24.) they rather choſe to expoſe themſelves to death, than deny, renounce, or diſown him, and his truths.

12 Therefore rejoice, ye heavens, and ye that dwell in

12 Therefore, as on occaſion of the Lord's redeeming and comforting his people, and having mercy on his afflicted, the heavens and the earth were called

in them, Wo to the inhabiters of the earth, and of the sea: for the devil is come down unto you, having great wrath, because he knoweth that he hath but a short time.

called upon to sing and be joyful; (*Isa.* xliv. 23. and xlix. 13.) so let heaven above, and all the saints and angels that dwell therein, and the whole church on earth, rejoice and triumph with them, (διὰ τοῦτο) on account of this happy change in the face of its affairs: But, at the same time, its visible members that dwell on the earth, which consists of land and water, and on the continent and the islands of the sea, and especially such of them as are carnal and earthly-minded under a profession of the true faith, may well tremble on account of the calamities they will yet be exposed to: * For the devil, whose power is not totally destroyed, though much weakened, is come down to distress and pervert you, as much as possible, with the utmost fury and rage; because he finds that his strength is on the declining hand; and that, as he has begun to fall, the time of his doing mischief to the church and cause of Christ shall ere long be brought to its period.

13 And when the dragon saw that he was cast unto the earth, he persecuted the woman which brought forth the man *child*.

13 Accordingly, when the devil, as exerting his power under the character of the dragon, that appeared with seven heads and crowns upon them, and ten horns, (*ver.* 3.) found himself so greatly baffled by *the Protestant-reformation*, like one cast down from heaven to earth, (*ver.* 9.) and saw that, in spite of all his endeavours to the contrary, pure Christianity had gained so considerable an ascendency in various countries, he turned all his malice and power, and raised up a new set of instruments †, against the true

NOTES.

* The paraphrase has given several senses of *the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea:* But, perhaps, what relates to the *continent* and the *islands*, and chiefly to the *earthly-minded* members of the visible church that would be most in danger of falling off by the devil's efforts, may best suit the intention of this part of the prophecy, as pointing to *Great Britain* and *Ireland*, and the nations on the continent, which threw off Popery at *the Reformation:* For the *Wo to the inhabiters of the earth and of the sea*, seems, from what follows in the next verses, to refer to the *woman* or church of Christ; and the *devil's knowing that he had but a short time*, is much more fairly applicable to the time of the Reformation, than of the downfal of *Paganism* in the Empire, which has been already about 1400 years ago; and therefore it could scarcely be said then, that the devil knew he had but *a short time*.

† The *Jesuits*, the most subtle and active of all the popish emissaries, were established, as a society, by *Ignatius Loyola* in the year 1534, soon after *the Reformation*, which was begun by *Luther* in the year 1517, and was carried into an open *protest* against the severe popish decrees at *Spire* in *Germany*, by several princes of the Empire in the year 1529, which was the original of the name *Protestants*, by which *the reformed churches* are called to this day: And how indefatigable numerous swarms of *Jesuits* have been in their endeavours to overthrow *the Reformation;* and what cruelties the Duke of *Alva* used in the *Netherlands*, and *Queen Mary* in *England;* and how the Council of *Trent*, the *Parisian* and *Irish* massacres, and numberless other efforts of popish princes have been spirited up to suppress and extirpate *the Protestant* religion, is so familiarly known, as are all the rest of the facts, corresponding to the interpretation given of this chapter, with respect to the time of *the Reformation*, that it is quite needless to quote particular authorities,

true church, which had been the mother of so fair and numerous an offspring, and had propagated, as by a man child, the cause of Christ in a succession of converts from age to age, and more especially at the time of *the Reformation*

14 And to the woman were given two wings of a great eagle, that she might fly into the wilderness, into her place: where she is nourished for a time, and times, and half a time, from the face of the serpent.

14 And, notwithstanding all these fierce attempts against her, God still took care of her preservation; and as he was said to *bear* Israel *on eagles wings*, when he brought them out of the land of *Egypt*; (Exod. xix. 4.) so the wonderful strength, speed, and safety, with which he would appear for the church at this season, may be represented by his giving her a pair of eagles wings, that she might flee away from the rage of her enemies, though attended with many difficulties, to her place of retirement, which he had provided, during her wilderness-state, (which was not yet come to its full period) for her escaping the fury and subtilty of that old serpent the devil, and his agents; and for her being refreshed and comforted by his word and Spirit, and the ministrations of his two witnesses, (*chap.* xi. 3. see the note there) to the end of all her trials and afflictions, which under various forms were to last till the expiration of twelve hundred and sixty years; and may be expressed, in the style of the prophet *Daniel*, (chap. vii. 25. and xii. 7.) by a *time*, or year, two *times* or years, and *half a time* or half a year, which make together twelve hundred and sixty prophetic days or years. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.)

15 And the serpent cast out of his mouth water as a flood, after the woman; that he might cause her to be carried away of the flood.

15 And this malignant serpent, the devil, (*ver.* 9.) did his utmost to prevent the church's escape to any place of retreat or safety, at the time of *the Reformation*, by pouring out a flood of error and persecution after her, to sink and drown her before she could reach it; which may fitly be represented by a torrent of water poured out of his mouth, that by the force of antichristian errors and enemies, which he raised up against her, he might pervert and ruin her, as by a mighty flood that bears down all before it; which might point to the vigorous attempts of the Jesuits, and others of the popish party, to overwhelm *the Reformation* by craft and power, before it was well established. (See the note on *ver.* 13.)

16 And the earth helped the woman, and the earth opened her mouth,

16 And yet, as great floods of water are swallowed up in caverns of the earth, to prevent the dreadful inundations which they would otherwise have made; so God in his providence inclined the hearts of many to

NOTE.

thorities, which may be seen in all the historians of those times; and are almost in every one's hands.

mouth, and swallowed up the flood which the dragon cast out of his mouth.

to interpose for the protection and shelter of his faithful servants and people, from the fury of the devil and his papal agents, that they might not be swallowed up by these attempts to destroy them; Which might point to some secular powers, such as King *Henry* the Eighth, and other princes, who, under the influence of temporal interests, favoured their righteous cause; and to some warm contenders for civil and religious liberty, who, though not themselves sincere Christians, detested persecution of all sorts; and so took the part of *Protestants* to prevent their being over-run by antichristian powers, and their tyrannical impositions upon conscience.

17 And the dragon was wroth with the woman, and went to make war with the remnant of her seed, which keep the commandments of God, and have the testimony of Jesus Christ.

17 And that old serpent and blood-thirsty dragon, the devil, inclusive of his popish instruments, was so enraged at this unexpected powerful assistance to the church of Christ, that he renewed his attacks with the utmost violence upon all he could possibly come at, of her spiritual children, whom by former methods he could not overcome; and who were a holy remnant reserved for God by his grace, and were faithful in having an universal respect to his commands, and in maintaining both a doctrinal and practical witness to the purity of the gospel, and of all its ordinances of worship, according to Christ's institutions; which might point at the last vigorous efforts of antichristian-power, that it should ever make against the reformed church, towards the close of the twelve hundred and sixty years of the beast's reign, and of the witnesses prophesying in sackcloth *.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How beautiful and glorious is the church of Christ, as lifted up above this world, and shining in illustrious rays of the Sun of righteousness, and of the pure apostolic doctrine of the gospel; and how earnest are her desires, prayers, and endeavours, that, in her, many converts may be born to God! And her labour shall not be in vain; for when Sion travails she brings forth her children.—But what a bitter enemy is Satan to the church's prosperity and increase! He watches to devour all her spiritual seed, as soon as they are born into the gospel-kingdom; and he with fury and subtilty under all the antichristian forms of a monstrous dragon, with seven heads and crowns and ten horns; and of an old serpent and false accuser of the brethren, sets himself to oppose, vilify, and destroy them. How fain would he and his popish agents swallow them up, as with a flood! and how indefatigable are they, from time to time, to renew their war against them! But though they may be suffered to drive them into a wilderness of solitude and affliction, they shall find safety and refreshment there, as if taken up to the throne of God for protection and comfort,

NOTE.

* If this relates, as I think, to the last push of popish power, which is still to come against the *Protestant cause*, and will issue in the entire defeat of its enemies, then the whole series of events sufficiently answers the summary prophetic description contained in this chapter, of the state of the church quite through the 1260 years of her being in the wilderness, and of antichrist's reign, in full agreement with the first and third general view that is given of this period in the preceding and next following chapters.

comfort, till the days of their mourning ſhall be ended: And how certainly ſhall victory fall on their ſide, when their warfare ſhall be accompliſhed! Chriſt and his miniſtring ſervants, whether angels or men, will take their part againſt the great dragon and his whole *poſſe* of infernal and antichriſtian inſtruments; and therefore, in the iſſue, he will defeat all their forces and throw them down from their tyrannical dominion.—Though the worſt of woes may fall on carnal Proteſtants, Chriſt will ever have a reſerve of a choſen remnant, that ſhall keep his commandments, and maintain the purity of his doctrines and ordinances; and when they are moſt expoſed to perſecuting enemies, the earth ſhall help the woman; and ſhe herſelf ſhall obtain the beſt of conqueſts over them, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, and by the light and power of his word and Spirit, even though it ſhould coſt many of her children their lives to abide by their teſtimony to him. O what matter of thankſgiving and praiſe is this! How ſhould all the ſaints on earth rejoice and triumph, with the holy angels and ſpirits of juſt men made perfect in heaven, for the ſalvation which is brought to the church in a diſplay of the glory of the kingdom of God and of the power of his Chriſt! This glory has begun to open in the reformation from popery. But O when ſhall the twelve hundred and ſixty years of her wilderneſs-ſtate come to its full period? it wears off apace: And when the power of antichriſt ſhall be demoliſhed, He that ſhall come, will come, and will not tarry.

CHAP. XIII.

A third general deſcription of the ſtate of the church, during the ſame period of 1260 *years under antichriſt's reign, who is repreſented by the figure of a wild beaſt riſing out of the ſea, to whom the dragon gave his power,* 1,—10. *And another repreſentation is made of the ſame by the figure of a beaſt, which had two horns like a lamb, and ſpoke as a dragon, exerciſing all the power of the former beaſt,* 11,—15. *And obliging all to worſhip its image, and receive its mark, as perſons devoted to it; with an admonition to conſider the time of the riſe of the beaſt, in order to our knowing the time of its fall,* 16,—18.

TEXT.

AND I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea, and ſaw a beaſt riſe up out of the ſea, having ſeven heads and ten horns, and upon his horns ten crowns, and upon his heads the name of blaſphemy.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the two preceding ſummary viſions, (*chap.* xi. and xii.) relating to the ſtate of the church and its antichriſtian enemies, for the ſpace of twelve hundred and ſixty years, methought, I ſtood upon the ſand of the ſea-ſhore; and there had another viſion, relating to the ſame period, in which was repreſented a ſavage wild beaſt, (θηριον) as an emblem, in prophetic ſtyle, of an *empire;* and this, being the *Roman*-empire, ſignified by the fourth and laſt beaſt in *Daniel*'s viſion, (*chap.* vii. 2, 3, 7, 8.) ſeemed to riſe up out of the ſea, as an emblem of the tumultuous ſtate of the nations, (*Rev.* xvii. 15.) like the troubled ſea in a ſtorm, when the barbarous *Goths* and *Vandals* would break in upon the Empire, and it would be divided into *ten kingdoms;* intimating that out of thoſe commotions this antichriſtian-power would riſe, which appeared under the emblem of *ſeven heads,* to ſignify that the ſeat of its dominion would

would be at *Rome*, which ſtands upon ſeven hills, and that it would be the ſeventh ſucceſſive form of ſupreme government; (*chap.* xvii. 9, 10. ſee the note there) and under the emblem of *ten horns*, to ſignify the ten kingdoms that would be united under, and ſubjected to its power; and *ten crowns*, one upon each horn, to ſignify the regal authority it would then exerciſe over all the ten kingdoms; And upon its ſeven heads were wrote the name of *blaſphemy*, and it was full of ſuch names, (*chap.* xvii. 3.) to ſignify that the power of the ſeventh form of government would be employed to ſet up, maintain, and propagate idolatry, in the worſhipping of images, and of ſaints and angels, which is a blaſphemous indignity thrown upon the unalienable honour of the only living and true God, and is juſtly ſtyled *blaſphemy* in the writings of the prophets. (*Iſa.* lxv. 7. and *Ezek.* xx. 27.)

2 And the beaſt which I ſaw was like unto a leopard, and his feet were as *the feet* of a bear, and his mouth as the mouth of a lion: and the dragon gave him his power, and his ſeat, and great authority.

2 And, methought, this beaſt had the appearance of a leopard, only his feet reſembled thoſe of a bear; and his mouth was terribly frightful, like the mouth of a ravenous lion; to intimate that all the cruelty, ſubtilty and power of the three preceding monarchies, repreſented in *Daniel*'s viſion, under theſe figures, (*chap.* vii. 4,—6.) would be united in this *Roman* papal empire: And the devil, who in my laſt viſion, relating to this period, was repreſented as exerting his power, by the antichriſtian-beaſt under the form of a great red dragon of ſeven heads and ſo many crowns, and ten horns, (*chap.* xii. 3. ſee the note there) was ſtill more diſtinctly and fully repreſented in *this*, as conveying all his tyrannical power of civil government to this ſavage wild beaſt, and placing him at *Rome*, *the great city which reigns over the kings of the earth*, (chap. xvii. 18.) and which had been the ſeat of perſecuting monarchs of the Empire in its *Pagan* ſtate: And he inveſted him, *whoſe coming is after the working of Satan*, with great authority to promote ſuperſtition and idolatry, by *all power, and ſigns, and lying wonders*; (2 Theſſ. ii. 9.) and to perſecute the true church of Chriſt with the utmoſt ſeverity.

3 And I ſaw one of his heads, as it were wounded to death; and his deadly wound was healed: and all the world wondered after the beaſt.

3 And I perceived that one of the ſeven forms of government, ſignified by the ſeven heads of the beaſt, was ſo deſperately wounded, as ſeemed to be paſt all hope of recovery; to intimate, that the imperial power under the *Roman* Cæſars would be ſubverted; and yet the wound, to all appearance mortal, was ſurpriſingly healed; which may be conſidered as referring to the erection of the imperial government under the Pope at *Rome*, from whence the ſupreme authority of the Empire had been entirely removed, during the

exarchate of *Ravenna*, without any human proſpect of *Rome*'s ever being reſtored to its ancient dignity again: (ſee the note on *chap.* viii. 12.) And upon this before unexpected and unlikely revival of the power of *Rome* under the temporal dominion of the Pope, all the nations of the Empire were aſtoniſhed at it; and ran with veneration and delight after the beaſt, as people uſed to do after a ſtrange and grand ſight, full of wonder at his amazing riſe and power, riches, honour, and grandeur. (*Chap.* xvii. 8.)

4 And they worſhipped the dragon which gave power unto the beaſt: and they worſhipped the beaſt, ſaying, Who *is* like unto the beaſt? Who is able to make war with him?

4 And the generality of them paid not only civil, but idolatrous worſhip, in effect, and by juſt conſtruction, to the devil himſelf, who before had been repreſented, as exerting his tyrannical power, by antichriſt, under the form of *the great red dragon*, (ſee the note on *chap.* xii. 3.) and had now conſigned it over to him, under the form of *the beaſt*, to whom, and to whoſe arbitrary and idolatrous injunctions and decrees, they readily ſubmitted and yielded implicit faith and obedience; looking upon him as a ſort of deity, and the univerſal head of the Empire, as well as of the church: And they wondering at the uncontroulable authority and power with which he reigned, cried out with pleaſing admiration and triumph, What power on earth is equal to this of the Pope, ſignified by the beaſt? What prince or potentate is able to reſiſt, or contend with him, or ſtand before him? All muſt and ſhall ſubmit to him, and vail to his authority over them, which he will aſſume by diſpoſing of crowns and kingdoms, and treating kings and emperors with indignity and contempt at his pleaſure *.

5 And there was given unto him a mouth ſpeaking great things, and blaſphemies; and power was given unto him to continue forty *and* two months.

5 And by the devil's influence, and God's permiſſion, he opened his mouth, as with great terror, ſo with high ſwelling words of vanity, talking at a haughty and imperious rate in promiſes and threatnings, and in blaſphemous boaſts of divine authority, and claims of religious, as well as civil homage to be paid to him, who would *exalt and magnify himſelf above every god.* (Dan. xi. 36.) And he was permitted to exerciſe his idolatrous and perſecuting power, more or leſs, through his whole reign, which was to laſt for the ſpace of forty and two prophetic months, which amount to twelve hundred and ſixty years, and make up the ſame period of time that is allotted to the church's being in the wilderneſs, and the witneſſes prophеſying in ſackcloth. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.)

6 Yea,

NOTE.

* A moſt ſhocking account of the extravagant pride, and tyrannical inſolence of *Popes*, in treating the perſons, crowns, and dignities of emperors and princes, may be ſeen in Dr. *More*'s theological works, p. 490.

6 And he opened his mouth in blasphemy against God, to blaspheme his name, and his tabernacle, and them that dwell in heaven.

6 Yea, he was represented as *speaking marvellous things against the God of gods*, (Dan. xi. 36.) and *sitting as God in the temple of God, shewing himself that he is God;* (2 Thess. ii. 4.) and arrogantly assuming the prerogatives of God in pretending to forgive sins, and usurping authority over mens consciences, and establishing such idolatrous laws and canons, as are a dishonour and reproach to his sacred name: And, methought, he went on with his blasphemous reproaches of *the church* of God,* (in which he after a special and gracious manner dwells, as he did in his tabernacle and temple of old) stigmatizing them as heretics and apostates; and robbing them of their glory, by setting up for an universal headship over them; which belongs to Christ only: He likewise disgraced the names and characters of departed saints and the angels in heaven, by fabulous legends about them, and turning them to an idolatrous use in paying the religious worship to them, which they detest; (*chap.* xix. 10. and xxii. 9.) and in anathematizing the faithful servants of Christ, that are citizens of the heavenly *Jerusalem*, and his holy martyrs that have their mansions in heaven.

7 And it was given unto him to make war with the saints, and to overcome them: and power was given him over all kindreds, and tongues, and nations.

7 And he was permitted by divine providence, and spirited up by Satan, to set himself against the professors of Christ, who were visible saints, by violent persecutions and wars upon those that should refuse to submit to his authority: By which means he was suffered to pervert some, and deprive others of their estates, liberty, and lives; and to exercise his tyrannical power over all nations of various lineages and languages through the vast extent of his empire.

8 And all that dwell upon the earth shall worship him, whose names are not written in the book of life of the Lamb slain from the foundation of the world.

8 And his power and authority, in the whole of his dominion, was represented to be so prevalent, that all the inhabitants of the Empire would be brought into either a forced, or willing obedience to his cruel and idolatrous decrees; except those whom God of his own mere grace has chosen, as his peculiar people, and knows as particularly and distinctly by name, as if they were written down, in a literal sense, in the Lamb's book of life; in which all are, as it were, registered, who were given him of the Father, to be redeemed and brought safe to glory, in virtue of his sacrifice, which may be said to have been slain, not only in the purpose of God from eternity, (see 1 *Pet.* i.

NOTE.

* By *his tabernacle* some understand the temple of Christ's body, in which he, the eternal *Word, who is God, dwelt*, or *tabernacled* on earth: (*John* i. 1, 14.) And this may be said to be blasphemed in the sacrifice of *the mass* by a pretended *transubstantiation*, and offering it up again and again, as though by one offering he had not perfected for ever them that are sanctified.

i. 19, 20.) but in the firſt promiſe, and in its typical repreſentations and prophecies, and ſaving efficacy, from the beginning of the world, ever ſince the fall of man.

9 If any man have an ear, let him hear.

9 If any one is deſirous to underſtand the meaning and importance of theſe prophecies, relating to this new antichriſtian power, Let him ſeriouſly attend to what has been ſaid about it, for his caution againſt holding any communion with it; and to what is going to be immediately added, for his encouragement, ſupport, and comfort, which is this:

10 He that leadeth into captivity, ſhall go into captivity: He that killeth with the ſword, muſt be killed with the ſword. Here is the patience and the faith of the ſaints.

10 The great antichriſt, who, during this period, takes ſo many captive at his will, and tyrannizes over their conſciences, ſhall not always prevail againſt the church of Chriſt; but ſhall at length be himſelf taken captive and reduced to an abject ſtate, and they ſhall triumph over him: He who has been the cauſe of eternal death to ſome, by means of his pernicious errors, and the cauſe of temporal death to others, by martyrdoms and wars, muſt himſelf, at the expiration of his term, be utterly deſtroyed, ſoul and body, by the ſword of men, and the ſword of the Spirit for ever; what meaſure he metes to them, God will meaſure to him again. (*Matth.* vii. 2.) It requires a great deal of faith to believe this, and of patience to wait for it; and as the people of God, during the reign of the beaſt, will have great occaſion for the exerciſe of both theſe graces; ſo here is a conſideration well ſuited to ſupport their patience at the worſt of times in hope of deliverance; and to ſtrengthen and animate their faith to perſevere and bear up with Chriſtian fortitude under all tribulations, as believing that what is foretold of the downfal of antichriſt ſhall ſurely be accompliſhed, in God's appointed time, to his glory, and their triumph over all his and their enemies.

11 And I beheld another beaſt coming up out of the earth; and he had two horns like a

11 After this, was preſented to my view another form of a beaſt, which, though for ſubſtance the ſame with that but now deſcribed, (*ver.* 1, &c.) may on account of its ſhape, and in different conſiderations of it, be called another beaſt *, which roſe up from the earth

NOTE.

* The obſcurities and difficulties that lie upon all conjectures I have met with about the meaning of this *ſecond beaſt*, moſt of which may be ſeen in Mr. *Lowman*'s note upon it, are ſo great and many, that it would anſwer no good end for the reader to be puzzled with them, as I myſelf have been; nor can I be fully ſatisfied with that, which I am moſt inclined to, though with *ſome* ſingularity, *viz.* that this *ſecond beaſt*, which exerciſes the *ſame power*, and has the *ſame mark*, and *name*, and *number*, with the firſt, is another repreſentation of the *ſame papal* empire ſet in a different point of light, chiefly (I do not ſay wholly) in its *eccleſiaſtical*, as the former was chiefly in its *temporal* power. And it is no uncommon thing for the ſame ſtate to be ſet out in Scripture by different emblems; as the *Perſian* empire is by a *bear* and a *ram*, (Dan. vii. 5. and viii. 3.) and the *Grecian*

a lamb, and he spake as a dragon

earth beneath, as issuing out of a worldly temper, and of the bottomless pit: (*chap.* xi. 7.) And he appeared with two horns, resembling those of a lamb, a symbol of his spiritual, as well as temporal dominion, who seemed to put on a specious air of meekness and gentleness, humility and purity, like a lamb; but, in reality, his anathemas and cruel injunctions, enforced by the civil arm, were as terrible, as the rage of a dragon.

12 And he exerciseth all the power of the first beast before him, and causeth the earth, and them which dwell therein, to worship the first beast, whose deadly wound was healed.

12 And under pretence of being the universal head of the church, he, as shewn to me in vision, assumes and makes use of all the power and authority, (ἐξουσιαν) that had been before represented as exercised by the beast, which appeared in a former vision under the figure of a monster of seven heads and ten horns, with a crown on each of them: (*ver.* 1.) And by violent methods of excommunications and persecutions, through the assistance of secular powers, he forces the carnally-minded inhabitants of that part of the earth, which is under his dominion, to pay all the religious homage, obedience, and submission to him under this new form of his appearing, as had been given to the monstrous beast that was represented under another figure in the foregoing vision, (*ver.* 3.) as recovering sovereign empire at *Rome*, after it seemed to have been mortally wounded past recovery.

13 And he doeth great wonders, so that he maketh fire come down from heaven on the earth, in the sight of men.

13 And, the more effectually to compass his tyrannical and idolatrous design, he pretends to miraculous powers; insomuch that, as *Elijah*, to vindicate the character of the Jehovah of *Israel*, as the only true God, obtained by prayer, that fire should come down from heaven, at one time to consume the burnt-sacrifice, and at another to consume the captains and their fifties, which were sent by king *Ahaziah* to apprehend him; (1 *Kings* xviii. 37, 38. and 2 *Kings* i. 10, 12.) so this two-horned beast seems to do like miracles, and *that* publicly in the view of many spectators, to

NOTE.

Grecian by a *leopard* and a *he-goat*; (Dan. vii. 6. and viii. 5.) and our Lord himself is represented, in this book of prophecy, sometimes as a *lion*, and at others as a *lamb*, and under various other characters. But, whether I am right in my thoughts of the *second beast*, or not, it is no great doubt with me, but that it relates to some form or other of the popish power, during the term of forty two prophetic months, or 1260 years, which are pointed out in the summary view that is given in this and the two preceding chapters, as the time of the beast's reign, and of the woman's being in the wilderness. (See the note on *chap.* x. 6.) And this is all that I think of moment in the present case, whichever way the vision of the beast, as appearing like a *lamb with two horns*, &c. be interpreted. But *the number of the beast*, ver. 18. at the close of the description of this *second beast*, manifestly relates to the *date* of antichrist's power, which is signified by the *first beast*. This seems to be a strong objection to all such interpretations, as make the *second beast* to be emblematical of any different person or power, that rose at any considerable distance of years after *the first*.

to confirm his falſe doctrines and uſurped authority; which may be conſidered as pointing at the *lying wonders*, (2 Theſſ. ii. 9.) and numerous ſham-miracles of the Romiſh church, which are boaſted of and recorded in their legends; and at their dreadful thunderbolts by public anathemas, in which they curſe the excommunicated with bell, book, and candle, as though they would bring fire down from heaven upon them; and which are executed, by delivering them over to the ſecular power to put them to death by *burning*, or other tortures, which are indeed *fiery trials*.

14 And deceiveth them that dwell on the earth, by *the means of* thoſe miracles which he had power to do in the ſight of the beaſt, ſaying to them that dwell on the earth, that they ſhould make an image to the beaſt, which had the wound by a ſword, and did live.

14 And he impoſes upon the ſubjects of his empire that are influenced by earthly things, deluding them into ſuperſtition and idolatry, by means of thoſe feigned miracles which he pretended to have power to work, under the countenance, approbation, and encouragement of the ſecular arm, the emblem of which was his *ſpeaking as a dragon*: (ver. 11.) And he perſuaded, enticed, and even commanded theſe earthly-minded people to ſet him up as an idol, and pay their homage to him, as to the image of the beaſt, which was repreſented in the former viſion to have recovered ſovereign empire at *Rome*, after it was thought to have been wounded unto death in its *ſixth* head; (*ver.* 3, 12.) which may be conſidered as emblematical of their deifying the Pope, and of all their image-worſhip, and paying blind obedience to the whole ſyſtem of popery, which was ſet up by his authority.

15 And he had power to give life unto the image of the beaſt, that the image of the beaſt ſhould both ſpeak, and cauſe that as many as would not worſhip the image of the beaſt, ſhould be killed.

15 And he had means ſufficient in his own hands to eſtabliſh his authority, as the living image of the former beaſt, together with the authority of all his idolatrous conſtitutions, and to enforce it with vigour and efficacy, that, like the imagined living oracles of the heathens, this living image of the beaſt might both ſpeak blaſphemies and terrors in publiſhing its arbitrary decrees and ſanguinary laws, and might execute them by excommunications, pains, and penalties, even to death itſelf, upon all that ſhould refuſe to worſhip, or to acknowledge, honour, and ſubmit to the injunctions of this image of the beaſt, according to the repreſentation that in the preſent viſion is given of it; which may be conſidered as pointing to the ſevere laws and practices of the Romiſh church, in its proceedings againſt all that renounce its authority, and are deemed heretics.

16 And he cauſeth all, both ſmall and great, rich and poor, free and bond, to receive a mark

16 And that the true ſons of the apoſtate church might be the more evidently diſtinguiſhed from others, who would not comply with his authority, he ordered that perſons of all ranks and degrees within the dominion of the papacy, high and low, rich and poor,

mark in their right hand, or in their foreheads;

poor, masters and servants, should make an open profession of their acknowledging it; which may be figured out by the emblem of a visible mark, impressed on their *right hand*, to denote their activity in his cause, or on their *foreheads*, to denote their visible profession of devotedness to him; in allusion to the custom of masters setting a mark upon their slaves, to signify that they were their own property *, and of heathen idolators marking themselves with some figure, in token of what deity they were devoted to.

17 And that no man might buy or sell, save he that had the mark, or the name of the beast, or the number of his name.

17 And so strict and severe were these orders †, that no one whatever was allowed the common privilege of merchandize or commerce in buying or selling, much less the pretendedly more valuable privilege of buying or selling pardons, dispensations, and indulgences, *&c.* except those that made an open profession of the popish religion, and thereby wore the distinguishing badge of the beast, and bore his name, like children of their own father, as the *Papists* do of the *Pope*, who in *Latin* is called *Papa;* or that took upon them the profession of that system of erroneous doctrines, which he established, and are characteristic of him, as the great antichrist.

18 Here is wisdom Let him that hath understanding count the number of the beast: for it is the number of a man; and his

18 It is an instance of adorable wisdom in God, for reasons best known to him, to foretel events of this nature in such a covert manner: And it requires spiritual wisdom and application of thought, with humble dependence on divine guidance, to understand the mystical descriptions of the antichristian beast. Whoever

NOTES.

* *Martial*, in his *epigrams*, (lib. 2. epig. 29. and lib. 3. epig. 21.) speaks of *slaves* being marked on their *foreheads;* and of one who endeavoured to hide the mark of his slavery, by putting a patch or plaister upon his forehead to cover it. And Dean *Prideaux* tells us, (*Connect.* Vol. II. book 2.) that *Ptolemy Philopater*, to degrade the *Jews* of *Alexandria*, ordered "that all of them that should come to be inrolled, in the third rank among the common people of *Egypt*, should at the time of their enrollment have the mark of an *ivy-leaf*, the badge of his god *Bacchus*, by an hot iron impressed upon them; and that all those who should refuse to be thus enrolled and stigmatized with the said mark, should be made slaves; and that if any of them should stand out against this decree, he should be put to death." And the custom of the heathens printing marks upon their bodies, signifying the deity to which they were devoted, is manifestly referred to in *Levit.* xix. 28. (See *Ainsworth* on the place.) And *Grotius* shews that *servants* were principally marked on their *foreheads*, and *soldiers* on their *hands*. (Vid. in loc)

† *Pareus* observes in his note on this verse, that Pope *Martin* the Fifth, in his *Bull* annexed to the Council of *Constance*, enjoined by an oath, that all who professed themselves to be devoted to the *Roman* See, should expel all those, that do not hold the faith and communion of the church, as scabby sheep, which infect the flock of the Lord; and should not permit them to preach, nor to dwell among them, nor to make any contracts or bargains, or exercise any trade among them; nor to enjoy with Christians the comforts of humanity. And Mr. *Craddock* refers to the Council of *Lateran*'s anathematizing all that entertained any of the *Waldenses*, or traded with them; and to a synod in *France*, which forebad any commerce with *heretics* in buying or selling.

his number is six hundred three-score *and* six.

Whoever is minded, and has any skill for inquiries of this sort, let him carefully employ it in a close and diligent search into the number of years henceforth to come, when this idolatrous power is to rise in its full strength, that he may thereby learn, who, or what is meant by this representation of it; and consequently, at what time its period of twelve hundred and sixty years shall expire. The finding out of this need not be absolutely despaired of: For its rise in its complete state is to be discovered by computing from the time of this vision a number of years, which is commonly used by men in their way of reckoning; and that number is * *six hundred and sixty six.*

RECOLLECTIONS.

In how many forms doth the papal antichrist appear! sometimes with the meekness and gentleness of a lamb to deceive, and at others with the fury and cruelty of a dragon to destroy; both uniting to pervert and ruin the church of Christ. With what blasphemies doth he open his mouth! With what lying wonders doth he impose upon earthly-minded men! With what uncontrouled authority doth he command and force his subjects to submit to idolatrous image-worship, and all the abominations of popery! And with what dreadful severity doth he curse all that will not openly profess absolute and blind obedience to him and his decrees! This is the plain mark of the beast; and they that have not this mark upon them, whether they be of high or low degree, must, according to his orders, be deprived of the common privileges of civil society and commerce, and of life itself. Alas! How many nations and people are deluded into fatal errors, to their eternal perdition, by his allurements on one hand, and terrors on the other! None under his dominion can be secured against it, but God's elect that are written in the Lamb's book of life, the virtue of whose sacrifice has been effectual to salvation, through faith in him, ever since the entrance of sin, soon after the creation of the world. But how much soever the *Romish* potentate may distress these by wars, persecutions, and martyrdoms, to the killing of their bodies, he shall never prevail to pervert and destroy their souls. And, blessed be God, there is a certain limited time,

NOTE.

* The obscurity in which the number *666* is left in prophecy, calls for studious modest inquiry, and humble prayer to settle the meaning of it. The learned Mr. *Potter*, in an elaborate discourse on this number, endeavours to adjust it by extracting the *square root* of *666*, which, with a fraction of 41 is 25, which multiplied into itself and adding the fraction, gives the number 666, and adding 25 to the year of our Lord 33, makes 58, and this, added to *666*, makes 724; when, as some think, the beast arrived to its state of manhood, and the war about worshipping of images began. Others have thought that this number might be made out by the *Greek* word Lateinos (λατεινος) which signifies the *Latin* church, the *numeral* letters of which make just *666*, thus,

λ α τ ε ι ν ο ς
30 1. 300. 5. 10. 50. 70. 200.

which, added together, amount to that number. But as these, however ingenious, are very uncertain conjectures, I have rather chose to fall in with such writers, as seem more probably to compute the number *666* from the time when the apostle *John* received and wrote this vision, which, says Mr. *Lowman*, taking the general received opinion, was about the year of our Lord 94; and adding *666* to 94 makes 760, which reaches but about four or five years beyond the rise of the beast, as supposed to be about the year 755, or 756, when the Pope became a temporal prince, and received the investiture of *Peter*'s patrimony from *Pepin* king of *France*, and might possibly be about 4 or 5 years in taking actual and complete possession of it. (See Mr. *Lowman*'s note.) According to this account, antichrist's reign is to expire about the year of our Lord 2015, or 2016, as may appear by adding 1260 to 755 or 756.

time, set in prophecy, for his utter downfal; when all the evil he has done to others, shall, in righteous vengeance, be retaliated upon him, to the glory of the Redeemer, and the happiness of his people. How delightful is the prospect of this; and what a support to faith and patience under all antichristian oppressions! Did we but certainly know when to begin the computation of the twelve hundred and sixty years of his reign from six hundred and sixty-six, we could be at no loss to say when they shall end. Such hints are given of this in prophecy, as became the wisdom of God; and we may hope to come at some knowledge of their meaning by humble inquiries into them, with a dependence on divine light and guidance. Let those of us therefore, who are desirous of understanding these things, seriously consider what is said in prophetic writings about them; and comfort ourselves with assured hopes, that, in God's prescribed time, the Church shall get through all her troubles, and triumph over all her enemies; and that then what we know not now, we shall know with the clearest evidence of their exact accomplishment.

CHAP. XIV.

To comfort the church under the melancholy representation which had been made in the foregoing visions of the 1260 *years of the witnesses prophecying in sackcloth, of the church's being in the wilderness, and of the reign of antichrist, a chorus of the heavenly church is introduced in another vision, as celebrating the praises of God, in the presence of the Lamb, for their happiness, who, as a virgin-company, had continued faithful to Christ and his cause under that period,* 1,—5. *Then follows a vision of three angels; one proclaiming, in a way of prediction, the everlasting gospel, which should be preached at the Reformation; another, the downfal of* Babylon, *the same with the antichristian beast; and a third, the dreadful wrath of God which should be poured out upon the worshippers of the beast, together with the blessedness of them that die in the Lord,* 6,—13. *To this is added a vision of Christ himself, with a sharp sickle in his hand, and of an angel crying to him to execute judgment on his enemies, as ripe for destruction, under the emblem of a harvest ripe for cutting down, which he accordingly did,* 14,—16. *And a vision of two angels more; one of which had also a sharp sickle; and the other cried to him to proceed to further executions of judgments, without delay, upon the antichristian party, that had filled up the measure of their iniquities, which was done with dreadful vengeance, under the emblem of a vintage fully ripe, and trodden in the wine-press of God's wrath,* 17,—20.

TEXT.

AND I looked, and lo, a Lamb stood on the mount Sion, and with him an hundred forty *and* four thousand, having his Father's name written in their foreheads.

PARAPHRASE.

AT the close of the preceding visions, (*chaps.* xi, xii, xiii.) which opened the most grievous scenes before me, relating to the state of the church's afflictions, and antichrist's reign, for twelve hundred and sixty years, I was immediately favoured with another, of a most delightful and encouraging nature, for the relief and comfort of the church under all the tribulations of the foregoing period. I looked with earnest desire to see what should next be revealed; and, behold! with admiration and joy, I again had a

vision of the true Lamb of God, who had been slain, (*chap.* v. 6.) as standing with victory and triumph on *mount Sion, the city of the living God*, where *Jesus the Mediator* is: (*Heb.* xii. 22, 24.) And with him I saw the hundred and forty four thousand, which had before been symbolically represented to me as his sealed ones, (*chap.* vii. 4.) to intimate, that during the whole reign of antichrist none of them were lost: All which appeared with the mark of God his Father's name visibly written on their foreheads, to denote that they were his peculiar people, who had made an open and honourable profession of Christ and his gospel in the worst of times, and were entirely devoted to him, as his faithful servants, in opposition to all those that had the mark of the beast. (See the note on *chap.* xiii. 16.)

2 And I heard a voice from heaven, as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of a great thunder: and I heard the voice of harpers harping with their harps:

2 And, methought, I heard a melodious voice of joy and praise from among this triumphing assembly in heaven; the voice of a vast multitude, as signified by *many waters;* (chap. xvii. 1, 15.) and a voice as loud as a great clap of thunder: And it was exceeding harmonious in mine ears, like the music of temple-worship on solemn festivals; where harpers played upon their harps, and others joined with their musical instruments, in charming concert with the voices. (1 *Chron.* xxv. 1,—7. and *Ps.* lxviii. 25.)

3 And they sung as it were a new song before the throne, and before the four beasts, and the elders: and no man could learn that song, but the hundred *and* forty *and* four thousand, which were redeemed from the earth.

3 And this glorious company united, as with one heart and voice, in singing a lofty hymn of *blessing, honour, glory, and power to Him that sits upon the throne, and to the Lamb for ever and ever;* (chap. v. 13.) A psalm or song of praise, of a most excellent nature, and new strain, for redeeming love, as suited to all the light, grace, and purity of the gospel-revelation. They were employed in this solemn act of worship in the presence of God, bowing with the most humble and adoring prostration before him, as sitting on the throne; (*chap.* iv. 10.) and in the presence of the four living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers; and of the four and twenty elders, the representatives of the church. (See the notes on *chap.* iv. 4, 6.) And so spiritual and sublime was this song, that none could fully understand it, or taste its sweetness, and join heartily in it, but those that are symbolically represented by the hundred and forty four thousand, who were redeemed by the blood of Christ, (*chap.* v. 9.) and, in consequence thereof, by his power and grace, from among the rest of mankind upon earth, and particularly of the antichristian part of them.

4 These are they which were not defiled

4 These are the holy and happy souls, who, in the days of antichrist's reign, did not defile themselves with

defiled with women; for they are virgins: these are they which follow the Lamb whithersoever he goeth; these were redeemed from among men, *being* the first-fruits unto God and to the Lamb.

with the idolatry of the Romish church, that *great whore of* Babylon, *and mother of harlots, with whom* many *committed fornication* or spiritual whoredom, (*chap.* xvii. 1, 2, 5.) as idolatry is often styled by the prophets: (see *Ezek.* xvi.) For they are like pure and chaste virgins, espoused to Christ, their one and only husband, (2 *Cor.* xi. 2.) and, as such, would never go into spiritual adultery in worshipping images, saints, or angels; or applying to any mediator but Christ. These are of those that keep close to the Lamb of God, in their dependence alone on the merit and virtue of his sacrifice, for pardon and all salvation, and in their faithful adherence to all his doctrines, ordinances, and moral commandments; following his guidance and example in every duty, trial, and affliction, in which he went before them, and called them to come after him, as sheep after their great Shepherd, till he should bring them safe to glory. These were redeemed to God, by his precious blood, from among *every kindred, and tongue, and people, and nation* of mankind, (see the note on *chap.* v. 9.) and were delivered by his grace from all the antichristian-party, and their sins and errors; they being a holy people, consecrated to God the Father, and to the Lamb who was slain; and being a pledge of many more, that should be so; even as *the first-fruits* were holy and consecrated to the Lord, and were an earnest of the following harvest.

5 And in their mouth was found no guile: for they are without fault before the throne of God.

5 And there was no designing hypocrisy or prevailing deceit in them; but they were faithful and upright, in their profession of Christ, and testimony against all idolatry and corruptions in doctrine and worship, and in all that they said: For in their governing behaviour, and conscience toward God, they are *without blame before him in love*, (Eph. i. 4.) and are accepted as completely righteous in his sight, who imputes not iniquity to them, but the righteousness of Christ, (*Rom.* iv. 6,—8. compared with *Psal.* xxxii. 1, 2.) in which he looks upon them, and they appear without any charge of guilt before his throne.

6 And I saw another angel fly in the midst of heaven, having the everlasting gospel to preach unto them that dwell on the earth, and to every nation, and kindred, and tongue, and people,

6 And as a further encouragement to faith, hope, and patience, I beheld an angel flying through the air, as one did before, (*chap.* viii. 13.) but now with a different, and more comfortable message; and *that* was to notify the preaching of glad tidings of great joy, as contained in the gospel of the ever-blessed God, which, for substance, is unchangeably the same, ever since the publication of it in the first promise, (*Gen.* iii. 15.) and never shall be abolished, as the ceremonial law was, but shall issue in eternal life. The angel proclaimed, that this gospel should be preached

preached to the inhabitants of the earth, even to all ſorts of people among them, of what nation, lineage, or language ſoever; Which may be conſidered as a prediction of God's raiſing up faithful miniſters at the *Proteſtant-reformation*, who ſhould preach the pure uncorrupted goſpel of Chriſt, and give ſolemn warnings againſt all corruptions of his word and ordinances, according to what this angel ſpoke, as repreſentative of them;

7 Saying with a loud voice, Fear God, and give glory to him; for the hour of his judgment is come: and worſhip him that made heaven and earth, and the ſea, and the fountains of waters.

7 Saying to all people, with great earneſtneſs, zeal, and fervour, as with a ſtrong voice, which might be heard far and wide, and demanded attention, See to it that ye worſhip and ſerve God in ſpirit and truth according to his word, as the only rule of faith and obedience, in oppoſition to human inventions and traditions, with holy reverence of him and fear of offending him by idolatry, or any other iniquity; and that ye glorify him, by humble adorations of his divine being and perfections, and his holy providence; and by aſcribing all ſalvation to his free and ſovereign grace, through the only Mediator, in oppoſition to the merit of good works, and the mediation of ſaints and angels: For the time is now come, in which he will begin to execute judgments upon his antichriſtian-enemies. And let all your worſhip be offered up to the great God, through Jeſus Chriſt, and, in oppoſition to all creatures, to him only, (*chap.* xix. 10. and xxii. 9.) who is the Creator of heaven and earth, and the ſea, and ſprings of water, and of all things contained therein.

8 And there followed another angel, ſaying, Babylon is fallen, is fallen, that great city, becauſe ſhe made all nations drink of the wine of the wrath of her fornication.

8 And, after this, there followed another angel with moſt joyful tidings to the church, giving them notice, that, in God's due time, their great antichriſtian-enemy ſhould be utterly deſtroyed, an earneſt of which was given in the *Proteſtant-reformation*, ſaying, in the very terms that had been uſed concerning the *Chaldean-Babylon*, (Iſa. xxi. 9.) and in prophetic ſtyle, which ſpeaks of things to come as though they were already paſt; and doubling the expreſſion to give the ſtrongeſt aſſurance of its certain accompliſhment, *Babylon is fallen, is fallen;* Thereby intimating that, as the ancient *Babylon* did actually fall, according to the prophecy; ſo antichriſtian *Rome*, that great city, which may be called myſtical *Babylon* for its haughtineſs, perſecutions, and idolatries, ſhould as certainly be deſtroyed in its appointed time; becauſe, as men uſe to be overcome by ſtrong wine, and lewd women are ſaid to entice their lovers to fornication, by giving them philters or love-potions; ſo by the allurements of riches, honour, and pleaſure, and the deceits of lying wonders, ſhe had intoxicated all nations

tions under her dominion, and prevailed upon them to have fellowship with her in idolatrous worship, which is frequently represented by the prophets, as spiritual whoredom, that incenses the wrath of God against the practisers of it.

9 And the third angel followed them, saying with a loud voice, If any man worship the beast and his image, and receive *his* mark in his forehead, or in his hand,

9 And a third angel succeeded the two last, with tidings as terrible to the antichristian party, as the two former were comfortable to the faithful servants of the Lord: But he gave them fair warning beforehand, saying with a thundering voice, enough to strike terror into all that heard it, If any one in these days of light, and after these plain notices, will still obstinately persist in paying religious homage to the antichristian-beast, which has been described under various forms, (*chap.* xiii.) and in submitting to his authority, and complying with image-worship, or other parts of Popish superstition and idolatry; and shall make an open profession of all this, like bearing its distinguishing mark on his forehead; or shall be active in serving its interest, like setting his hand to it, (see the note on *chap.* xiii. 16.) he will do it at his utmost peril.

10 The same shall drink of the wine of the wrath of God, which is poured out without mixture, into the cup of his indignation; and he shall be tormented with fire and brimstone, in the presence of the holy angels, and in the presence of the Lamb;

10 Be he who, or what he will, he shall feel the weight of divine vengeance: As he drank of the intoxicating wine of the great whore's fornication, in practising idolatry with her, (*ver.* 8.) he shall drink of the wine of God's just fury, (*Jer.* xxv. 15, 16.) which, like the strongest deadly composition, is prepared without mixture of mercy, and is poured out with dreadful abhorrence of such an one, as into a cup filled with his provoked wrath; and he shall be punished with agonizing pain, as with the torment of burning fire and brimstone, in the sight of the holy angels, as witnesses and executioners of it; (*Matth.* xiii. 49, 50.) and before the face of the Lamb of God, as Judge of all, who will pass a righteous sentence upon such an one, and will behold his deserved misery, without relenting, or affording any help or pity.

11 And the smoke of their torment ascendeth up for ever and ever: and they have no rest day nor night, who worship the beast and his image, and whosoever receiveth the mark of his name.

11 And so horrible was the representation of the punishment of such offenders, that, methought, I saw the smoke of the fire, which tormented them, ascending up incessantly with dismal darkness, as from a fire which shall not be quenched to all eternity: (*Mark* ix. 43, 44.) And they, like miserable wretches that are in the bitterest anguish day and night, have no intermission, ease, or respite of their torment, who yield themselves up to the authority of the antichristian-beast, under any form of its appearing; and this shall be the deplorable condition of every one who openly professes obedience and devotedness to it, as though

though its name were printed on his forehead. (See the note on *chap.* xiii. 16.)

12 Here is the patience of the saints: here *are* they that keep the commandments of God, and the faith of Jesus.

12 In this view of things, we see the trials that the patience of the saints will be put to, and the honour with which it will appear and be crowned at last, in the accomplishment of what they patiently waited for: Here we see who they are, that, notwithstanding all oppressions by antichristian-enemies, keep close to the word of God, as the only rule of their faith, worship, and obedience, and faithfully conform to it in heart and life; and that maintain the purity of the doctrines and institutions of the Lord Jesus, as what they sincerely believe, profess, and practise upon his sole authority, in opposition to all the corruptions, traditions, and impositions of men.

13 And I heard a voice from heaven, saying unto me, Write, Blessed *are* the dead which die in the Lord, from henceforth: Yea, saith the Spirit, that they may rest from their labours; and their works do follow them.

13 And for their further support and comfort under all tribulations, I heard a voice from heaven, like that which came from the excellent glory, relating to our blessed Lord, (2 *Pet.* i. 17.) saying to me, Write in your narrative of these prophetic visions, that they who die in the faith of Christ, united to him as members of his mystical body, and shall be found in him *, (*Phil.* iii. 9.) as well as they who suffer martyrdom for Christ, are and shall be unspeakably happy from the time of their death to all eternity: Yea, the Spirit of prophecy, whose testimony is infallibly true, positively assures them, from this time forward, of the certainty and excellence of this blessedness, which is so great, that, at the end of their trials on earth, they shall rest with sweet refreshment from all their labours and sufferings for Christ, from all their spiritual conflicts with sin, Satan, and the world, and from all sorrows of every kind: And none of their works of faith, love, and patience, shall be lost, or forgotten; but they shall all follow them to bear witness to them, as true believers who die in the Lord, that they may receive the blessed fruit of them in a proportionate reward of grace, at the great day of account; (see *Rom.* viii. 17. and 2 *Cor.* iv. 17.) though they do not go before them, in a way of plea or merit, to entitle them to eternal life.

14 After

NOTE.

* I rather think that *the dead who die in the Lord*, relates to *all true believers* that have a saving interest in Christ, than merely to *martyrs* for his sake: For this best agrees with the meaning of like phrases in 1 *Cor.* xv. 18. and 1 *Thess* iv. 14, 16.; and a declaration of the blessedness of all such is more extensively useful and encouraging to the whole church, under her various troubles, in the present state of sin and sorrow. And though the particle (απαρτι) rendered *from henceforth* is differently referred by critics to either what goes before, or to what follows after it, there may be no great difference in the sense as given in the paraphrase.

14 And I looked, and behold, a white cloud, and upon the cloud *one* ſat like unto the Son of man, having on his head a golden crown, and in his hand a ſharp ſickle.

14 After this, I looked again for ſome further revelation; and, obſerve the following viſion, I ſaw an illuſtrious bright cloud; and upon this cloud the Lord Jeſus, the Meſſiah himſelf, who was truly man, and often ſtyled *the Son of man*, appeared, in like manner as he did in *Daniel*'s viſion; (*chap.* vii. 13.) he alſo appeared with rays of glory upon his head, which may be called a crown of gold, to ſignify his royal dominion, as Lord of all; (*Dan.* vii. 14.) and with the figure of a ſharp ſickle in his hand, ſuch as huſbandmen uſe in reaping corn; an emblem of his coming forth in righteouſneſs to cut down his antichriſtian enemies *.

15 And another angel came out of the temple, crying with a loud voice to him that ſat on the cloud, Thruſt in thy ſickle, and reap: for the time is come for thee to reap; for the harveſt of the earth is ripe.

15 I alſo beheld another angel coming forth from the church-triumphant in heaven, which is eminently the temple of God where he moſt glorioufly dwells; and this angel, as delivering the order which he brought from God in the heavenly temple, earneſtly called upon the Lord Jeſus, who ſat on the bright cloud, ſaying, Execute righteous vengeance on evil doers, without delay, which was emblematically expreſſed by immediately thruſting his ſickle among them and reaping them down: For it is high time, according to their provocations and to divine appointment, that thou ſhouldſt cut them off; for the wicked inhabitants of the earth are become as ripe for deſtruction, as the corn is to be cut down at the harveſt, like what was ſaid of ancient *Babylon*. (Jer. li. 33.)

16 And he that ſat on the cloud thruſt in his ſickle on the earth; and the

16 Accordingly, the ſet time for this ſtroke upon antichriſtian powers being come, the Son of man, who appeared as ſitting upon the cloud, (*ver.* 14.) immediately began to execute judgments on that wicked

NOTE.

* Some are of opinion, that in this viſion, the *ſickle*, *reaping*, and *harveſt*, are to be taken in *a good ſenſe*, as they often are in Scripture; and that they here refer to Chriſt's reaping the fruits of the goſpel-miniſtry, and gathering a great multitude of ſouls into his kingdom, at the time of the *Reformation*; or to his gathering the whole church to himſelf at the end of the world.—But as theſe expreſſions, and thoſe in the next viſion, manifeſtly allude, at leaſt, to *Joel* iii. 13. where they ſignify *the judgments of God for the great wickedneſs* of the people; and as the *ſharp ſickle* in the hand of the angel, that appeared in the next viſion, (*ver.* 17.) was an emblem of execution, it ſeems moſt proper to interpret the ſame emblem in the ſame way in both theſe viſions, whether we refer the *firſt* to the ſtroke upon antichriſt at the *Reformation*, which was a great diſtreſs upon her, and diminution of her ſubjects and power, or to any other puniſhment of her before her downfal; and refer the *ſecond* to her *utter deſtruction* at the cloſe of her appointed period, or to the final judgment of all the wicked. But as the *vintage* is *after* harveſt, and is repreſented (*ver.* 18, &c.) in more terrible language of deſtruction than the *harveſt*, I am inclined to conſider the *harveſt* as emblematical of the ſtroke given to Popery at the *Reformation*; and the *vintage* of that which ſhall come with the heavieſt vengeance hereafter, to the *utter extinction* of that antichriſtian power. And the general deſcription here given of this total overthrow is drawn out more particularly, and at large, in the 18th and 19th chapters.

the earth was reaped.

ed generation; and multitudes of them were as effectually cut down as corn is with a ſickle in harveſt; which may point at the great blow he gave to the beaſt, when ſeveral nations fell off from, and made head againſt Popery at the time of *the Reformation*, which was a great loſs and terror to the antichriſtian-party, and the occaſion of bloody wars, by which many of them were ſlain; and the Lord did *judgment upon their graven images*, as he did upon thoſe of ancient *Babylon*. (Jer. li. 47, 52.)

17 And another angel came out of the temple which is in heaven, he alſo having a ſharp ſickle.

17 And as Chriſt has all inſtruments at his command to execute his wrath; ſo I afterward ſaw another angel come forth from the immediate preſence of God in the heavenly temple, with the like emblem of a ſharp ſickle in his hand, to ſignify that he was to be employed for further executions of wrath, in ſubordination to, and by the command and power of Chriſt.

18 And another angel came out from the altar, which had power over fire; and cried with a loud cry to him that had the ſharp ſickle, ſaying, Thruſt in thy ſharp ſickle, and gather the cluſters of the vine of the earth; for her grapes are fully ripe.

18 Hereupon, methought, another angel came forth from the altar of burnt offering, the fire of which, to conſume the ſacrifices, was an emblem of divine juſtice, which this angel had authority (ἐξουσιαν) to denounce; and he, according to his commiſſion, called aloud with great earneſtneſs to the angel, who appeared with the emblem of a ſharp ſickle, in token of his being armed for vengeance, (*ver.* 17.) ſaying, Go on to execute further judgments in the ſlaughter of the antichriſtian-party, the meaſure of whoſe iniquity is now full, and of whom it may be juſtly ſaid, as it was of idolatrous *Iſrael*, *Their vine is of the vine of Sodom; their grapes are grapes of gall, and their cluſters are bitterneſs.* (Deut. xxxii. 32.) Cut them off, as the cluſters of grapes are cut off from a vine with a ſharp hook, at the time of vintage; for they have fitted themſelves for juſt deſtruction, as grapes are in fit caſe to be preſſed when they are thoroughly ripe.

19 And the angel thruſt in his ſickle into the earth, and gathered the vine of the earth, and caſt *it* into the great wine-preſs of the wrath of God.

19 Immediately upon this, methought, I ſaw the forementioned angel, (*ver.* 17.) cut down the apoſtate church, which may well be ſtyled the degenerate vine of the earth, as with a ſharp crooked knife; and, gathering them together, delivered them up to be puniſhed by the moſt dreadful executions of divine wrath, which would preſs them with as ſore and heavy calamities as are figuratively repreſented in the writings of the prophets, by the treading of grapes in a wine-preſs. (*Iſa.* lxiii. 3, 4. and *Lam.* i. 15.) And this appeared, in my viſion, as a very *great* wine-preſs, on account of the vaſt multitude that Chriſt will then *tread down in his anger and fury*. (Iſa. lxiii. 3, 6.)

20 And

20 And the wine-preſs was trodden without the city, and blood came out of the wine-preſs, even unto the horſe-bridles, by the ſpace of a thouſand *and* ſix hundred furlongs.

20 And the deſtruction of the idolatrous perſecuting enemies of Chriſt, that were without the pale of his true church, and ſhall be excluded from the heavenly city, (*chap.* xxii. 15.) and caſt into *outer darkneſs*, was ſo exceeding great and extenſive, as ſignified by the treading of a large wine-preſs, which is wont to be done without the city, that in alluſion to the greateſt ſlaughter in a field of battle, and to the juice of grapes, which, being ſqueezed out, is called *the blood of grapes*, (Gen. xlix. 11.) their blood ſeemed to flow, like prodigious quaintities of liquor, from a huge wine-preſs, in ſuch a torrent, as might be figured out by its riſing and ſwelling as high as the bridles of war-horſes, to the deſtruction of them and their riders; and ſpreading through all the *Pope*'s patrimony, the length of which may be computed at ſixteen hundred furlongs*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How delightful is a view of Chriſt as the Lamb on mount *Sion* among his people, and of their ſinging with inimitable ſtrains of melody, the praiſes of redeeming love! Theſe have diſtinguiſhing marks of the children of God, that own and honour him, and are owned and honoured by him: Theſe are they that were redeemed from among the reſt of mankind on earth: They are pure from the ſuperſtitious and idolatrous worſhip of the Papiſts; and follow the Lamb whereſoever he goes, and are a kind of firſt-fruits conſecrated to him and his Father; they are ſincere in their profeſſion of his name, and are prevailingly holy and without blame in love, and free from guilt and condemnation, through faith in the righteouſneſs of Chriſt: In theſe, patience ſhall have its perfect work; and they will conſcientiouſly obey the commandments of God, and maintain the uncorrupted doctrines of Chriſt, with a humble truſt in him for all ſalvation; and theſe ſhall be bleſſed from the time of their death, and for ever afterwards, as has been declared by an immediate voice from heaven, and by the infallible Spirit of prophecy. How thankful ſhould we be, that after a long night of popiſh darkneſs, the everlaſting goſpel was preached in its purity, and with great ſucceſs, at the Reformation! What a bleſſing is this to the church of Chriſt! and what a humbling and vexatious ſtroke upon antichriſt, and ſure preſage of her utter downfal! This ſhall be as certainly accompliſhed in God's appointed time, as it is now foretold. And, ah! how dreadful will the portion of their cup be, who have drank of the wine of her fornication, by joining in her idolatrous worſhip! They ſhall drink of the cup of

NOTE.

* Mr. *Joſeph Mede* obſerves, that it is not ſaid that the angel, which caſt the grapes into the wine-preſs trod them; but this was done by Chriſt himſelf, who is repreſented as the King coming forth from heaven, with a celeſtial army of horſemen to deſtroy them: (Vid. *Bibliarid* in loc.) And ſays in his *Remains*, (l. 3. chap. 7. p. 736. of his works) "Suppoſing this *vintage* to be yet to come, I am much inclined to think, that this 1600 furlongs without the city ſhould be a deſignation of *Peter*'s patrimony; or the demeſns of the church, which, in the longeſt extent thereof, from the walls of *Rome* to the river *Po*, is exactly 1600 furlongs, or 200 *Italian* miles; whereby it is probable that the Pope's own territories, *Stato della Chieſa*, may prove the cockpit of this execution, whether Chriſt, as into a wine-preſs, will from all parts gather the bloody grapes, when he means to tread them." However, as the execution here pointed at, ſeems yet to come, it probably will be at the cloſe of the period ſet out in prophecy, for the reign of the beaſt: And though we may not be able to determine the exact time and circumſtances of it, it will as ſurely be brought to paſs, in God's appointed time, as the *harveſt* and *vintage* return in their appointed ſeaſons.

God's wrath, without mixture; and their torment shall be incessant for ever and ever. The Lord Jesus, who appeared on a bright cloud with a glorious crown, will espouse the cause of his church and people, and come forth in righteousness against their antichristian-enemies, by gradual dispensations of providence, in which he will cut them down, as with a sickle in harvest; till at length he will make a full end of them, as the grapes of a vintage are cut off, and cast into and trodden in a wine-press, till all their juice is squeezed out. Thus shall it be done in God's set time to the idolatrous and tyrannical church of *Rome;* and the slaughter of them will be great and terrible beyond expression. How should we rejoice in faith and hope of the glorious, though awful manifestation, that will then be made of God's righteous judgments, to open a way for the prosperous and happy state of the church, which shall succeed it.

CHAP. XV.

A vision of seven angels, having the seven last plagues, follows, by way of solemn preface to the execution of them, as to be made upon the beast; and a song of praise is sung by the church, which obtained victory over him, 1,—4. *Then the temple in heaven is opened, from whence the seven angels come out with the seven plagues; and to them one of the living creatures gives seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, that they might be ready to pour them out in their order: Upon which, the temple was filled with an inaccessible cloud of glory,* 5,—8.

TEXT.

AND I saw another sign in heaven, great and marvellous, seven angels, having the seven last plagues, for in them is filled up the wrath of God.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions, which gave me a general view of the judgments that should come upon the antichristian-beast, I had another, which was preparatory to the execution of the judgments themselves, that in their order were to begin, carry on, and complete his ruin. To this purpose I beheld a very remarkable and amazing appearance in heaven of seven angels, as ministers of divine vengeance, who had a commission to execute the seven last severe strokes that were to fall upon antichrist, in their course, till he should be utterly destroyed: For all the wrath, which God had righteously determined against this idolatrous and persecuting power, was contained in these executions to make a full end of it, together with all the enemies of Christ and his church.

2 And I saw as it were a sea of glass, mingled with fire; and them that had gotten the victory

2 I furthermore saw, as in a former vision, (*chap.* iv. 6.) a representation of a large vessel, like the molten sea, in *Solomon*'s temple, (1 *Kings* vii. 23.) which shone with a brightness as white and clear as crystal, mixt with a beautiful colour, as red as fire*; Which

NOTE.

* Among the numerous conjectures about the meaning of *the sea of glass*, it seems to me that all those are to be discarded, which refer to the state of the church *on earth;* the scene of this vision being in heaven, *ver.* 1. as it also had been in the former vision of *the sea of glass*, where *the four living creatures*, or

tory over the beast, and over his image, and over his mark, *and* over the number of his name, stand on the sea of glass, having the harps of God.

Which may be considered as an emblem of the spotless purity and efficacy of the atoning blood and righteousness of Christ, whereby he appeased the fiery resentments of divine justice: And, as to the glorious company which, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, had bravely resisted, and by their doctrine, example, and patient sufferings even unto death, had overcome all temptations to comply with the authority of antichrist, and to make an open profession of his idolatrous religion, which may be signified by their getting the victory over the beast, and his image and mark, and the number of his name; These appeared as standing with confidence and triumph on the sea of glass, as the foundation on which they stand with complete acceptance in the divine presence; and they seemed to have harps in their hands, in allusion to those musical instruments that were used in the temple-service for celebrating the praises of God.

3 And they sing the song of Moses the servant of God, and the song of the Lamb, saying, Great and marvellous *are* thy works, Lord God Almighty; just and true *are* thy ways, thou King of saints.

3 And, methought, they joined in concert, as a chorus, to sing the wonders of Divine Providence in a triumphant song for deliverance out of the hands of their persecuting enemies, like that which was composed by *Moses* the servant of the Lord, and was sung by *Israel* for their deliverance from the *Egyptians* at the Red-sea: (*Exod.* xv. 1, &c.) And to this they added a song of thanksgiving and praise to the honour of Christ, the Lamb of God, for the much greater salvation brought in by him; a song, which he put into their mouths, saying, in an ascription of glory first to God the Father*, Great and wonderful

NOTES.

or representatives of the ministers of the church, appeared. (*Chap.* iv. 6. See the note there.) And among the interpretations, which consider it as *in heaven*, that given in the paraphrase, I am ready to think, may be as probable as any other, since these victorious and triumphing saints are represented as *standing on the sea of glass;* and so may direct our thoughts to the *foundation* on which they stand with joy and praise, rather than to their own purity, love, and zeal, or any other excellent graces found in them, or exercised by them. And as the following paraphrase on this chapter proceeds upon the supposition, which I think the Spirit of prophecy determines, that *heaven* is the scene of this vision, it need not be wondered at, that it is different from the sense of most expositors, who place the scene in the church *on earth;* or that I take no further notice of their explications, while I all along give what seems to me the most probable that has offered to my thoughts upon the plan of this scene's being *in heaven.*

* Though Christ in his divine nature is truly *the Lord God Almighty*, and characters equivalent to this are elsewhere ascribed to him; (see the notes on *chap.* i. 4, 8. and Dr. *Waterland*'s sermons at the Lady *Moyer*'s Lecture, p. 230, &c.) Yet it appears to me that *God the Father*, or God *essentially* considered, inclusive of the three divine persons, is here most immediately spoken of under this title; and that Christ in his *office-capacity*, is meant by *King of saints*, to whom glory is ascribed together with the Father: For the *former* part of this song seems to relate to the song of *Moses;* and the *latter* to the song of *the Lamb:* And the title, *King of saints*, is with the greatest propriety given to Christ, who in his regal office is,

wonderful are thy works of providence in ways of judgment and mercy, O Lord Jehovah, the almighty God, whose uncontroulable power performs them; and then to the glorified Lamb, saying, Thou art just and righteous in all thy proceedings against thine enemies, as rendering to them according to their deserts; and thou art true in executing thy threatnings upon them, and faithful in performing thy promises to thy people, O thou King of the church, which consists of holy ones, whom *thou hast redeemed from all iniquity, and purified to thyself.* (Tit. ii. 14.)

4 Who shall not fear thee, O Lord, and glorify thy name? for *thou* only *art* holy: for all nations shall come and worship before thee; for thy judgments are made manifest.

4 Who, that knows thy name, O Lord, will not reverence, worship, and put his trust in thee, and ascribe all glory to thee, who art infinitely worthy of it? (*Ps.* lxxxix. 7.) For, in opposition to antichrist's vainly assuming to himself the title of *his Holiness*, thou only art fit to wear it, as thou art originally, essentially, and communicatively pure and holy. We believe, and rejoice in the thought, that the time is coming, when thou wilt be more abundantly feared and glorified on earth, than hitherto: For all nations of the world shall come as a willing people unto thee, and own and honour thee, and pay their solemn adorations to thee, as in thy special presence, and under thine eye, in the assemblies of the saints; for the judgments, which thou wilt execute upon thine antichristian enemies, are manifest tokens of thy taking the part of thy people against them, to the conviction of all that duly observe the awful operations of thy hand.

5 And after that I looked, and behold, the temple of the tabernacle of the testimony in heaven was opened:

5 At the conclusion of this praising song, I had a further vision, which led on to the scene of judgments that were to be executed in their order: And as the holy of holies in the tabernacle and temple, and the ark of the testimony, the mercy-seat, and the cherubim between which the Lord dwelt, (*Exod.* xxv. 22. and *Ps.* lxxx. 1.) were seen when the high priest entered into the most holy place; so, methought, I saw an opening in heaven, which gave me a view of God's most eminently glorious throne, and of all the symbols of his favour to his true worshippers, to intimate that, as inquiries were wont to be answered from the oracle, (2 *Sam.* xvi. 23.) so God was now about to answer the prayers of the church for delivering them from the power of their antichristian enemies.

6 And the seven angels came out of the

6 Whereupon, I beheld seven angels, the appointed ministers of God's wrath and justice, coming out of

NOTE.

is, by way of peculiarity, *King of Sion*, and *King of the church*; and the following part of this song is evidently, though not restrictively, applicable to him.

the temple, having the seven plagues, clothed in pure and white linen, and having their breasts girded with golden girdles.

of the most holy place, even heaven itself, as having received his orders with respect to the seven judgments, that were to be successively executed upon the beast: These angels, to signify the sanctity of their character and ministrations, appeared as arrayed in an awful and splendid manner with holy garments of pure and white linen, and golden girdles about their breasts, such as the high priests used to wear, (*Exod.* xxviii. 4,—8. and *Lev.* xvi. 23.) when they went into the holy of holies, and came out from thence to bring the answers of God to the prayers of his people, which they had received from the oracle.

7 And one of the four beasts gave unto the seven angels, seven golden vials full of the wrath of God, who liveth for ever and ever.

7 And one of the four living creatures, the representatives of gospel-ministers, (see the note on *chap.* iv. 6.) who were most nearly concerned for the welfare of the church, was employed, by divine commission, to deliver to the seven angels, to each of them one of the seven golden cups or vials *, which were filled with mortal ingredients, as symbols of the wrath of God, which they were to be instruments of pouring out upon the idolatrous persecuting beast, at his order, and by the activity of his own power, who is from everlasting to everlasting God, and lives for ever to execute his righteous judgments in their course, till all his enemies be utterly destroyed.

8 And the temple was filled with smoke from the glory of God, and from his power; and no man was able to enter into the temple, till the seven plagues of the seven angels were fulfilled.

8 And when they had received their commission, I saw the heavenly temple filled with a cloud of glory, resembling that which formerly filled the tabernacle: This cloud appeared like a thick smoke awfully glorious, which was a symbol of divine vengeance, (*Ps.* xviii. 8.) as going forth from the presence of the Lord, and to be executed by the glory of his power, in the destruction of antichrist; even as the cloud on the tabernacle was of his dreadful judgment upon *Corah*, *Dathan*, and *Abiram*, and the murmuring *Israelites:* (Numb. xvi. 19, 42.) And as *Moses* could not enter into the tabernacle, nor the priests stand to minister in the temple while the *glory of the Lord filled the house of the Lord;* (Exod. xl. 35. and 1 Kings viii. 11.) so no one was able to enter into this heavenly temple, to entreat for the preventing of these grievous calamities upon the beast; none were suffered to do this, that judgment might have its free course, till all the seven punishments, to be inflicted by

NOTE.

* A *vial* was a cup, or wide-mouthed vessel, to drink out of; and as a *cup* figuratively signifies *sufferings* and *afflictions*, Psal. xi. 6. and *Matth.* xxvi. 39. and we often read of a *cup of the Lord's fury*, and a *cup of trembling*, Isa. li. 17, 22. Jer. xxv. 15. and Zech. xii. 2.; so these seven *vials* or *cups* are said to be *full of the wrath of God*, which was to be poured out upon, and drank by the antichristian-beast, and all the enemies of the church. (See also *chap.* xiv. 10.)

by the miniſtry of the ſeven angels, were fully executed in their order.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How glorious are the triumphs of the ſaints, who ſtand in the immediate preſence of God, with all acceptance on the foot of the atoning righteouſneſs of Chriſt; and who, through faith in his blood, have got the victory over all their enemies! And how ſweetly do they ſing of mercy and of judgment; of the wondrous works of providence and grace, which are juſt and true, to the glory of the Lord God Almighty, and of the Lamb, their ſovereign Lord and King! How worthy is he to be reverenced, ſerved, and glorified! All the beauties of holineſs, and of every other divine perfection, ſhine in him; and the time is coming, when all nations of the earth ſhall worſhip him, and his judgments ſhall be fully manifeſted in the deſtruction of the antichriſtian beaſt. The decree is gone forth againſt him; the ſeven angels have their commiſſion to pour out their ſeven vials, which are filled with the wrath of God, to be executed in due courſe upon him; and no interceſſions ſhall be admitted, to prevent the progreſs of theſe judgments, till they be fulfilled in the utter deſtruction of all popiſh powers, and every other enemy. What a ſupport and encouragement to the church of Chriſt is the belief and aſſured proſpect of this, as given by the Spirit of prophecy, for their comfort under all their preſent tribulations?

CHAP. XVI.

The ſeven angels are ordered to pour out their ſeven vials of the wrath of God on the antichriſtian-beaſt and all its ſupports, 1. *The firſt vial is poured out on the earth with grievous ſores, ſignifying great troubles through the Romiſh community, between the year* 830 *and* 988, 2. *The ſecond on the ſea, which is turned into blood, ſignifying a great effuſion of blood in the holy wars, between the year* 1040 *and* 1190, 3. *The third on the rivers and fountains, which became blood, ſignifying civil wars in the papacy, between the year* 1200 *and* 1371, 4,—7. *The fourth on the ſun, which ſcorched men, ſignifying wars through the contentions of Popes for the papal chair; and the deſtruction of the Eaſtern empire, between the year* 1378 *and* 1530, 8, 9. *The fifth on the ſeat of the beaſt, ſignifying the eſtabliſhment of the Proteſtant-reformation, which was a great ſhock to Popery, between the year* 1530 *and* 1650, 10, 11. *The ſixth on the great river Euphrates, ſignifying ſome terrible invaſion of the Pope's dominion, from its eaſtern borders, which ſeems, in order of time, to be yet to come,* 12,—16. *And the ſeventh on the air, the ſeat of Satan's power, which ſhall iſſue in the total deſtruction of all antichriſtian enemies,* 17,—21.

TEXT.

AND I heard a great voice out of the temple, ſaying to the ſeven angels, Go your ways, and pour out the vials of the wrath of God upon the earth.

PARAPHRASE.

THE ſeven angels, having received their reſpective vials or cups of the wrath of God; (*chap.* xv. 7. ſee the note there) and ſo being ready to pour them out in their order, whenever he ſhould give the word of command; I thereupon heard an exceeding loud, awful, and authoritative voice, proceeding from the heavenly temple; (*ver.* 17.) whereby, in alluſion to God's

God's ancient way of manifesting his will from the oracle, he issued out his commission, saying to them, Go forth according to my appointment, and pour out the cups successively *, that are full of the righteous wrath of God, upon the wicked inhabitants, and particularly the antichristian-enemies, on the face of the earth; a general view of which had been given me in several foregoing visions.

2 And the first went, and poured out his vial upon the earth; and there fell a noisome and grievous sore upon the men which had the mark of the beast, and *upon* them which worshipped his image.

VIAL I.] 2 And, in obedience to this command, the *first* angel went forth, and poured out his cup of divine wrath upon *the earth;* which may signify people of various countries, and chiefly of the inland parts of the antichristian-territories: And thereupon, methought, the most loathsome and painful boils and ulcers, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, (Exod. ix. 9,—11.) broke out upon, and tormented this spiritual *Egypt*, in various miseries which befel them, even the subjects of the papacy, that had complied with the authority and corruptions of the antichristian-beast, and made an open profession of the idolatrous worship that he had set up; (*chap.* xiii. 15. see the note there) † which may be considered, as referring to the general

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* There is a remarkable similitude between the four first *vials* or cups of God's wrath, under the seventh trumpet, which relate to the judgments that led the way to, and should issue in the *ruin of antichrist;* and the four first *trumpets*, under the seventh seal, (*chap.* viii.) which relate to the destruction of the *Roman* empire, and made way for the *rise of antichrist.* They are represented in *both*, as falling upon *the earth, the sea, the rivers, and fountains of water*, and *the sun*, and *that* in the same order; which may intimate that the steps of her *fall* shall be answerable to those of her *rise.*

† As the first of these vials, and consequently all that follow, is expressly said to be poured out upon the men that had *the mark of the beast, and worshipped his image*, we must, I think, conclude that the judgments, intended by them, are such as were to be executed upon the antichristian-church, during the period of 1260 years, after the Pope had obtained his temporal power. And though, among the many different constructions about their accomplishment, it does not become us to be positive in either of them; yet Mr. *Lowman*'s pleases me best, as it preserves the series, as far as they have hitherto appeared by historical facts, in a most regular order. —*Wounds, bruises, and putrifying sores; wounds that stink, and are corrupt, and loathsome diseases*, are striking figures of a corrupt and miserable condition, *Isa.* i. 5, 6. and *Ps.* xxxviii. 5, 7. Accordingly, the *noisome and grievous sores* are a fit emblem to represent a corrupt and calamitous state of the worshippers of the beast; and this the but now mentioned learned writer thinks may relate to "all sorts of corruptions that gained ground, and prevailed in the *Romish* church and state, which brought a painful sore, and was in great measure the cause of those many evils, that for a long time afflicted the inhabitants of the earth, during the quarrels and contests between the successors of *Charles* the Great, and were an occasion of many other calamities, that greatly weakened the Western Empire by the *Normans* (who were Heathens) invading and ravaging several parts of it, especially in *France;* by the *Saracens* ravaging *Italy;* and the *Hungarians*, then a barbarous and brutal people, breaking in upon the *German* dominions; which was the calamitous state of the Western Empire, for above 100 years from the death of *Lewis* the Pious, A. D. 840, to the settlement of the *German* empire in *Otho* the Great, A. D. 962; and well agrees to the prophetic description, and to the time and order of the

general corruption of faith, worſhip, and manners, and the ſore diſtreſſes, in body and mind, of the profeſſors of this apoſtate church, when dreadful devaſtation was made upon them, as occaſioned by the contentions and quarrels, which aroſe between popiſh princes after the death of *Lewis* ſirnamed the *Pious*, and continued for a long time, between the year *eight hundred and thirty, and nine hundred and eighty-eight.*

3 And the ſecond angel poured out his vial upon the ſea; and it became as the blood of a dead man: and every living ſoul died in the ſea.

VIAL II.] 3 And the *ſecond* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon *the ſea;* which may ſignify many people of the *Romiſh* empire, (*chap.* xvii. 15.) that dwelt upon the borders, or iſlands of, and trafficked upon the ſea: And as the waters of *Nile*, in another plague of *Egypt*, were *turned into blood*, and the fiſhes in that great river died; (*Exod.* vii. 17, 18.) ſo every one in thoſe parts, who owned, and lived in ſubjection to the popiſh power, was in danger of being mortally wounded, and of his blood being congealed, like that of a dead man; thereby intimating, that vaſt multitudes would periſh in the wars, that would moſtly be carried on by ſea; which may be conſidered as referring to the wars that enſued upon the Pope's claiming a power of excommunicating and depoſing emperors, and to the holy wars, that he ſet on foot for recovering *Jeruſalem*, and the ſepulchre of our Lord and the holy land, from the *Saracens*, who had taken poſſeſſion of it; in which wars many hundred thouſands of papiſts loſt their lives: All which came to paſs between the year *one thouſand and forty, and eleven hundred and ninety.*

4 And the third angel poured out his vial upon the rivers and fountains of waters; and they became blood.

VIAL III.] 4 And the *third* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath on *the rivers and fountains of waters;* which may alſo ſignify a multitude of people in ſome principal countries of the popedom; and thereupon, as the ſtreams, rivers, ponds, and pools, as well as the great river *Nile*, in the foremen-tioned plague of *Egypt*, became blood; (*Exod.* vii. 19,—21.) ſo it was intimated that theſe countries ſhould be filled with blood; which may be conſidered as referring to the dreadful civil wars between the *Guelphs*

NOTE.

prophecies, with reſpect to each other." The hiſtorical facts correſpondent hereunto, and to the four following vials, are ſupported by the authority of writers of the greateſt credit, as he has quoted them at large, which, as far as I have had opportunity of examining them, appear to be faithfully repreſented.—I readily agree with this, and ſome other judicious expoſitors, that whether we can be certain as to the preciſe times and contents of each particular judgment, ſignified by the ſeveral *vials* in their order, or not, there is a general uſe to be made of the more general meaning, if we were to underſtand no more of it, for the encouragement of faith and patience, and for warning us againſt falling in with the great apoſtacy of this period.

Guelphs and *Gibellines*, and between popes and emperors, that continued for above a hundred years, and occasioned vast effusions of the blood of the inhabitants of cities, towns, and villages, in most parts of *Italy*, between the year *twelve hundred, and thirteen hundred and seventy one*, which cut off abundance of the Pope's dependents, and was a great diminution of his power.

5 And I heard the angel of the waters say, Thou art righteous, O Lord, which art, and wast, and shalt be, because thou hast judged thus;

5 And no sooner had this angel executed his commission for pouring out his vial of divine wrath upon the countries, signified by the rivers and fountains of waters to turn them into blood, than I heard him say, with a voice of solemn adoration and praise, Just and righteous are these awful dispensations of thy providence, O Lord, who in thy being and perfections, counsels and appointments, art, and ever wast, and wilt be from everlasting to everlasting unchangeably the same: Thy ways of judgment ever have been, are, and will be, all righteous; and thou must, and shalt be justified in them, and particularly in the judgment now denounced; because, in this way of retribution, thou hast justly retaliated upon this persecuting blood-thirsty people the very same sort of punishment, as they had wickedly inflicted upon thy church.

6 For they have shed the blood of saints and prophets, and thou hast given them blood to drink; for they are worthy.

6 For they have, in a most cruel manner, imbrued their hands in the blood of thy holy people and ministring servants, that have suffered martyrdom, and therein bore an honourable testimony to thee and thy cause, and sealed it with their blood; Which may be considered as referring to the *Waldenses* and *Albigenses*, great numbers of which had been lately persecuted unto death at the instigation of Pope *Innocent* the Third *; who also set up a bloody court of *Inquisition*, about the year *twelve hundred and twelve:* And therefore thou hast given them a cup of wrath to drink, by sending the sword among them,

NOTE.

* The *Waldenses* were so called from *Waldo*, a citizen of *Lyons* in *France;* and the *Albigenses* took their name from *Albi*, another city of *France* in the upper *Languedoc*, where they first appeared; and their opinions were mostly the same with those of the *Waldenses*, who declared against the authority of the Pope, and many corruptions of the *Romish* church; such as *transubstantiation*, *purgatory*, *praying for the dead*, and *worshipping of saints*. These toward the beginning of the 13th century were persecuted under the influence of Pope *Innocent* III. who erected a *Court of Inquisition* for extirpating heretics, as they were called: In order to which he appointed commissaries to inquire after them. They that were suspected of heresy were examined by torture; and the accused were not allowed the privilege of defending themselves, or making any appeal. At first they were punished with imprisonment; afterward were put to death by the sword, and most commonly, at length, by burning: And in the year 1212 say some, or 1216 say others, he made *Dominicus*, a *Spaniard*, inquisitor-general. (Vid. *Spanh.* Eccles. Hist. p. 1657, &c.)

that they may *be drunken with their own blood;* (Isa. xlix. 26.) and hast thereby rewarded their iniquity upon their own heads; for by their murderous cruelties they have highly deserved it.

7 And I heard another out of the altar say, Even so, Lord God Almighty, true and righteous *are* thy judgments.

7 And the equity of this divine procedure was so evident and affecting, that, methought, I immediately heard the voice of another angel, who, as it were, personated the souls under the altar, that had been long ago slain by *Rome*-Pagan, (*chap.* vi. 9.) echoing back to, and joining in this solemn applause, to signify the consent and approbation of the whole church, saying, *Amen*, I heartily concur with this ascription of glory to thy righteousness in this way of thy judgments, O Almighty Jehovah, who hast made known thy great power herein: Thou art true in fulfilling thy threatnings of thine enemies, and faithful in performing thy promises to thy people; and art undeniably and gloriously just in inflicting this deserved punishment on such a blood-thirsty generation; as thou also art in all the judgments, which thou hast begun to execute, and wilt further carry on, till thou shalt utterly destroy the *Antichristian*, as thou hast the *Pagan* persecutors.

8 And the fourth angel poured out his vial upon the sun; and power was given unto him to scorch men with fire.

VIAL IV.] 8 And the *fourth* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath on the *sun;* which, being the chief of the heavenly bodies, is a fit emblem of the supreme power or headship over the church, which is claimed by the Pope, as *Jacob*, the father of the family, was signified by the *sun* in *Joseph*'s prophetic dream: (*Gen.* xxxvii. 9, 10.) And the angel had a commission, by means of this judgment, to bring tormenting distresses on the wicked men of the earth, as extreme and destructive as are produced by the most violent burning heat of the sun, when it smites the earth, and its fruits and inhabitants, as with fire in a hot and sultry day, without any shade to screen them from it. (See *Ps.* cxxi. 5, 6.)

9 And men were scorched with great heat, and blasphemed the name of God, which hath power over these plagues: and they repented not, to give him glory.

9 Accordingly the Popes themselves, together with the subjects of the papacy, were as sorely afflicted in body and mind, as by the parching and noxious heat of the sun, when it shines in full strength, and burns up all before it; which may be considered as referring to the terrible calamities that arose from various causes, and particularly from the ambitious intrigues and furious wars that were carried on between several Popes for the papal chair, between the year *thirteen hundred and seventy-eight, and fifteen hundred and thirty* *. And under all these piercing calamities,

NOTE.

* There were many warm contests between *Urban* and *Clement* VII; and afterward

lamities, they who ſuffered by them were enraged at them; and, like a wicked people of old, *fretted themſelves, and curſed their God,* (Iſa. viii. 21.) quarrelling with, and reproaching his providence, who had power to inflict, or remove theſe puniſhments: And they hardened themſelves in their cruel and idolatrous practices, and evil ways, and obſtinately refuſed to give glory to him, by acknowledging the juſtice of his dealings with them, and by confeſſing their iniquities, and accepting the puniſhment of them, or forſaking them, but ſtill perſiſted in them; which may be ſuppoſed to refer to their barbarous and perfidious perſecutions of *John Huſs*, and *Jerome* of *Prague*, notwithſtanding all the judgments which they themſelves were groaning under.

10 And the fifth angel poured out his vial upon the ſeat of the beaſt; and his kingdom was full of darkneſs, and they gnawed their tongues for pain.

VIAL V.] 10 And, next in order, the *fifth* angel poured out his cup of wine wrath upon *the throne* (θρονον) of the antichriſtian-beaſt, the emblem of his *power;* which in prophetic ſtyle is ſignified by a *throne;* (2 Sam. iii. 10. and vii. 16. and 1 Kings i. 37, 47.) And may be conſidered as referring to the great ſhock that was given to the authority and dominion of the Pope, by the glorious *Proteſtant-reformation*, when, between the year *fifteen hundred and thirty*, and *ſixteen hundred and fifty*, it was completely eſtabliſhed, and many nations fell off from him, and turned their arms againſt him; and others retrenched their

NOTE.

afterward between *Eugene* IV. and *Felix*, beſides other intermediate competitors for the Popedom, which they ſeverally claimed at the ſame time. This occaſioned excommunications one of another, and violent perſecutions and wars, that were ſeverely diſtreſſing to themſelves, and to their reſpective adherents, during the ſchiſm, which, having laſted for above 50 years, ended about A. D. 1447. Here may alſo be a further reference to the ſchiſm between the *Greek* and *Latin* churches, and the wars between the Chriſtians of the *Eaſtern* and *Weſtern* Empire, which remarkably weakened *both*, and gave the *Turks* an advantage, which iſſued in their taking *Conſtantinople* about A. D. 1453, and putting an end to the *Eaſtern* Empire. Others ſtill further take in the conſideration of a peſtilential diſtemper, which ſpread like fire in *Germany* about A. D. 1529, and had infected *England* in a ſweating ſickneſs ſome years before. All which events were between the year 1378 and 1530. Within this period was the Council of *Conſtance*, which about A. D. 1414, condemned *John Huſs*, and afterwards *Jerome* of *Prague*, to be burnt to death for oppoſing the Pope; and they were accordingly executed, contrary to the moſt ſolemn promiſes of ſafe paſſports, under pretence that *no faith is to be kept with heretics.* (See, for theſe facts, the authorities quoted in Mr *Lowman*'s hiſtory of them.)—Some have included theſe villainous executions in *the ſcorching heat of the ſun.* But as all the judgments, ſignified by the *vials*, were to fall on the *papal party*, I can ſcarce think that this vial related to the death of thoſe noble witneſſes againſt the corruptions of *Rome;* though, probably, it might to the *vexation* which their brave teſtimony to the death gave their adverſaries, and to the *Bohemian* war that was occaſioned by this decree of the Council of *Conſtance*, and the execution of it, which coſt great numbers of Papiſts their lives. And their going into theſe violent meaſures, while the hand of God lay ſo heavy upon them, may, perhaps, be pointed at, by *their not repenting to give him glory.*

their obedience to his authority; which was a great eclipse of his glory and diminution of his power, and a sore vexation to his spirit, and to the subjects of his kingdom, which, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, (Exod. x. 21,—23.) was full of hideous darkness, the emblem of disconsolate sorrow and affliction; (*Isa.* v. 30. and ix. 1.) and was so distressing to them, that they raged like persons, who bite their tongues for madness and extremity of anguish.

11 And blasphemed the God of heaven, because of their pains and their sores, and repented not of their deeds.

11 And instead of being reclaimed by these troubles from their superstition, idolatry, and persecutions, they continued inveterate enemies to Christ and the gospel; and, in effect, spoke opprobriously of the great Lord of heaven and earth, on account of his bringing many painful anxieties and sore rebukes upon them, though it were for their iniquities; Which may be considered as pointing at their reviling the first reformers, and their adherents, as *schismatics*, *heretics*, and *apostates*, and inveighing against their separation, and the means used to support it, though apparently under the conduct of the God of heaven, as unlawful, damnable, and rebellious: And so blind and hardened were their hearts, that they would take no conviction of the evil of their doings, as the procuring cause of all the punishments that befel them; which might refer to the Council of *Trent*, that, notwithstanding all the light of the Reformation, established the whole system of their corrupt doctrines and idolatrous worship; the Council beginning in the year of our Lord 1545, and ending in the year 1563.

12 And the sixth angel poured out his vial upon the great river Euphrates; and the water thereof was dried up, that the way of the kings of the east might be prepared.

VIAL VI.] 12 And the *sixth* angel poured out his cup of divine wrath upon the great river *Euphrates*, which, literally taken, was the eastern part of the *Roman* empire, and the barrier of the *Assyrian* and *Babylonian* empires; and so was a proper emblem of the eastern boundaries of the papal kingdom: And by the pouring out of this vial the barrier was destroyed, that had prevented invasions from those quarters upon the Popedom; which, in allusion to the draining of *Euphrates* by *Cyrus*, when he took *Babylon*, (Isa. xliv. 27, 28. Jer. l. 38. and li. 36, 37.) may be signified by the drying * up of the waters of the

NOTE.

* See Dean *Prideaux*'s account at large of the *draining of the* river *Euphrates* by *Cyrus* at his taking *Babylon*. (Connect. Part I. book 2. p. 121, &c. edit. 4th.)—There are indeed several other interpretations of this *vial*, than that supposed in the paraphrase, which may be seen in many expositors. Some refer it to the conversion of the *Jews*, as signified by *the kings of the east*, in order to which the *Turkish* empire is to be weakened: Others think that some newly converted princes of the *East* will pass *Euphrates* to join with the true church of Christ: Others understand it as relating to the ruin of the *Turkish* empire, or *Eastern-antichrist*: Others, to the removal of obstacles, such as the terror of the bulls,

the great river *Euphrates*, that a passage might be opened for the *Turks*, or some princes of eastern countries, to invade mystical *Babylon;* and may be supposed to relate to some powerful invasion of the kingdom of the papacy by that people, as a future judgment, which is not yet executed upon it; but is still to come, as the next is that shall follow it; and is to be prayed and waited for with faith and patience, and to be explained by events, which shall as certainly be brought to pass, i.. God's time, to fulfil these parts of the prophecy, as any of the foregoing have been, and as all the rest shall be, in their order.

13 And I saw three unclean spirits like frogs *come* out of the mouth of the dragon, and out of the mouth of the beast, and out of the mouth of the false prophet.

13 And I further saw, in my vision of what would come to pass under this *vial*, a figurative representation of three impure spirits, which, in allusion to another plague of *Egypt*, (Exod. viii. 3,—6.) were as filthy and loathsome as the frogs that crept into their bed-chambers, and crawled about on the earth and in the waters; and may be considered as an emblem of the activity, trouble, and mischief, of these wicked spirits, which were represented as proceeding, one out of the mouth of the great dragon, the devil; (*chap.* xii. 9.) another out of the mouth of the antichristian-beast, which has seven heads and ten horns with crowns upon them; (*chap.* xiii. 1.) and a third out of the mouth of the second representation of the antichristian-beast, which appeared with two horns like a lamb, but spoke as a dragon; (*chap.* xiii. 11.) which may also be fitly styled the false prophet. (*Chap.* xix. 20. and xx. 10.) These united together in sending forth their emissaries, such as the Jesuits, Monks, and Friars, and secular clergy, to creep into the secret councils of princes, that they might corrupt them, as the frogs of *Egypt* crept into the chambers of the king; (*Exod.* viii. 3.) and to spread wicked principles and practices by their influence.

14 For they are the spirits of devils, working miracles, which go forth unto the kings of the earth, and of the whole world, to gather

14 For these ecclesiastics are of the very same spirit and temper with the infernal demons, who excite and influence them to make false pretences and appearances of working miracles, as the magicians of *Egypt* did, that by these *lying wonders*, and other crafty methods, they might deceive the princes of the

NOTE.

bulls, edicts, and censures of *Rome*, that had before prevented the princes of *Europe* from invading the Pope's dominions, but will no longer be a terror or bar to them, which these writers suppose may be signified by the figurative *Euphrates* being *dried up*. But I humbly apprehend that we want light sufficient to determine any thing particularly about such an obscure representation of this *vial*, till the providence of God shall turn the prophecy into a history, in the fulfilment of it, by some eminent judgment upon the papacy, greater than all that has preceded it.

gather them to the battle of that great day of God almighty.

the earth, and particularly of the papal empire; and might ſtir up all the inhabitants of the world, whom they could draw into their intereſt, to engage them to join together as a formidable army, that ſhould ſet themſelves in battle-array againſt Chriſt and his church, in their laſt united and moſt vigorous oppoſition to the almighty God, who is infinitely ſtronger than all his enemies.

15 Behold, I come as a thief. Bleſſed *is* he that watcheth, and keepeth his garments, leſt he walk naked, and they ſee his ſhame.

15 As this will be a time of great trial to the church, The Lord Jeſus ſaid, Obſerve what I now declare beforehand, for their caution and comfort, I will come as ſuddenly, ſurpriſingly, and unexpectedly, as a thief in the night, to the deſtruction of my antichriſtian-enemies, and the deliverance of my people from their power. Happy, and only happy is that man, who in a prepared waiting and looking for it, ſhall be found all along, and at that day, to be upon his watch, like one who by that means keeps his garments from the thief that would rob him of them; and to maintain his faith in me for righteouſneſs unto eternal life, and his integrity and ſoundneſs in principles and manners, unſpotted by the defiling doctrines and practices of popery; leſt, at my coming to take vengeance on that party, he be expoſed to diſgrace and confuſion, like the man who had not on a wedding-garment; (*Matth.* xxii. 11, 12.) and leſt, in the ſight of numerous ſpectators, he have nothing to cover the ſhame of his nakedneſs.

16 And he gathered them together into a place, called, in the Hebrew tongue, Armageddon.

16 And it was ſtill further repreſented to me, that, in this laſt ſtruggle againſt the church, the devil, as working in and by wicked and ſeducing ſpirits, would muſter all his forces together as in a field of battle, which, for the dreadful ſlaughter that would then be made of his armies, may be compared to that famous place, which, according to the ſignification of the *Hebrew* word *Armageddon*, is the mountain of *Megiddo*, (הר־מגדו) in the tribe of *Manaſſeh*; (Joſh. xvii. 11.) and may be called the *Mountain of deſtruction*, where *Siſera* was defeated, and his numerous hoſt cut off by *Barak* with the edge of the ſword; (*Judg.* iv. 15, *&c.* and v. 19.) and where king *Joſiah*, for his imprudent raſhneſs, was ſlain by *Pharaoh Necho*, king of *Egypt*; (2 Kings xxiii. 29, 30.) on which account the greateſt lamentations were proverbially expreſſed by *mourning in the valley of Megiddon.* (Zech. xii. 11, 12.)

17 And the ſeventh angel poured out his vial into the air; and there came a great voice

VIAL VII.] 17 And upon this grand defeat of antichriſtian-powers, The *ſeventh* and laſt of the angels poured out his cup of divine wrath into *the region of the air*, which encompaſſes the whole earth, as an emblem of the vengeance that ſhould be executed

voice out of the temple of heaven, from the throne, saying, It is done.

ted upon Satan, *the prince of the power of the air, the spirit that works in the children of disobedience;* and upon all the demons, which are the *rulers of the darkness of this world*, and *spiritual wickednesses in high places:* (Eph. ii. 2. and vi. 12.) And to shew that this would be the destruction of Satan's empire, and of all the enemies of the church with him, I heard a loud majestic voice, proceeding from the throne of God in his heavenly temple, saying, The great work is now accomplished; it, according to a former hint, that has been given of the mystery of God, as to be finished, (*chap.* x. 7.) is now brought to its issue; This last cup of divine wrath has completed the judgments which God had purposed to execute, unto the total overthrow and ruin of Satan and all his agents, that they may no longer pervert the doctrines of the gospel, or persecute Christ's faithful servants.

18 And there were voices, and thunders, and lightnings; and there was a great earthquake, such as was not since men were upon the earth, so mighty an earthquake *and* so great.

18 And as a further lively emblem of this, methought, I heard and saw in the air, into which this last vial was poured, such tremendous and astonishing sounds, and cracks of thunder, and flashes of lightning, as though the whole frame of the aerial heavens were dissolving; and these were attended with such a terrible and universal earthquake, and of such mighty force, as was never felt since the earth was peopled; which may be supposed to represent such amazing convulsions and commotions in this world, as should make a thorough change in the whole system of its religious affairs, to the entire destruction of the dominion of the devil, together with all antichristian powers upon earth; and to the setting up of that glorious state of the church, in which, as has been hinted, (*chap.* xi. 15.) *the kingdoms of this world shall become the kingdoms of the Lord and of his Christ;* and will be a lively image of the heavenly state of perfect happiness, when *God will make all things new.* (Chap. xxi. 5.)

19 And the great city was divided into three parts, and the cities of the nations fell: and great Babylon came in remembrance before God, to give unto her the cup of the wine of the fierceness of his wrath.

19 And the immediate effect of this amazing *catastrophe*, as represented in vision, was, that the great city of *Rome*, the head of the papal empire, and all under its jurisdiction, were terribly shattered, and divided into three parts, to be destroyed by three sorts of punishment, in allusion to the threatnings denounced against *Jerusalem*, and the apostate *Jews* for their abominations, when God said, *A third part of thee shall die with the pestilence, and with famine shall they be consumed in the midst of thee; and a third part shall fall by the sword round about thee: and I will scatter a third part into all the winds, and I will draw out a sword after them:* (Ezek. v. 12.)

And, together with the capital city of the antichriſtian empire, the other cities under its dominion, and the cities of all nations that oppoſed Chriſt and his goſpel, fell in the wide-ſpreading ruins: And the whole of that idolatrous and perſecuting body, which is myſtically called *Babylon*, (chap. xvii. 5.) and *Sodom*, and *Egypt*, (chap. xi. 8.) and ſeemed to be forgotten of God, through his long-ſuffering and patience, was now remembered by him, to take vengeance upon her for all her wickedneſs, corruptions, and oppreſſions, to make her drink the dregs of the cup of his fierce indignation, as filled up with the moſt deadly ingredients, without mixture of mercy, (*chap.* xiv. 10.) in the ſevere puniſhments that were inflicted upon her, by way of retaliation for her having made *the inhabitants of the earth drunk with the wine of her fornication.* (Chap. xvii. 2.)

20 And every iſland fled away, and the mountains were not found.

20 And as earthquakes ſometimes ſwallow up iſlands, and overturn mountains, this puniſhment was repreſented to be ſo extenſive, as to reach every place where antichriſtian-enemies dwelt, that they might no longer be found, either on the iſlands or continents of the earth; and that the idols, which were wont to be worſhipped upon mountains, might be utterly deſtroyed.

21 And there fell upon men a great hail out of heaven, *every ſtone* about the weight of a talent: and men blaſphemed God, becauſe of the plague of the hail; for the plague thereof was exceeding great.

21 And, to ſet forth the univerſal and total ruin of the devil's empire, there were not only repreſentations of thunder, lightning, and an earthquake, to deſtroy cities, towns, and villages, and to overthrow iſlands and mountains within its dominion; but whereſoever men fled, as in caſes of earthquakes they uſe to do into the fields, to eſcape danger, there was no ſafety for them; but prodigious ſtorms of hail, like one of the plagues of *Egypt*, (Exod. ix. 22,—25.) though inexpreſſibly more terrible than *that*, or than the ſtorm of hail-ſtones which fell upon the *Amorites*, (Joſh. x. 11.) or than any other before or after thoſe, were ſhowered down from heaven upon them, to cruſh and daſh them to pieces: Every ſtone of which ſeemed to be of ſuch an aſtoniſhing ſize, as if it were a talent in weight: And yet theſe obdurate impenitent wretches, inſtead of taking conviction of their iniquities, and ſaying, even ſo much as the hard-hearted *Pharaoh* did under the plague of hail, *the Lord is righteous, and we are wicked*, (Exod. ix. 27.) ſpake blaſphemouſly againſt the providence of God therein, as if he had dealt unjuſtly by them: For their diſtreſs and anguiſh, by means of this laſt cup of his wrath, was intolerably tormenting to them, as will be found, in God's appointed time, for finiſhing their deſtruction. (*Chap.* xviii.)

RECOL-

RECOLLECTIONS.

How manifestly righteous are the judgments of God, that shall be executed, in due season, upon antichristian idolaters and persecutors, and all the wicked and ungodly of the earth! They act under the influence of unclean diabolical spirits, which deceive the nations, and set them as in battle-array against the Almighty; and, instead of being reformed by one and another judgment, they obstinately persist in their iniquitous courses, and blaspheme the name of God, as though he dealt unjustly in punishing them. But, how long soever he may bear with them, he has his set-time for calling their sins to remembrance, and pouring out the vials of his righteous wrath upon them. And, ah! how dreadful are the calamities, which he sooner or later, will inflict upon them! They are as grievous and tormenting as the foreſt ulcers; as nauseous and mortal, as seas and rivers of blood; as distressing, as the most scorching heat of the sun, which, like fire, burns up all before it; as doleful, as the thickest darkness; as exposed to every invading misery, as a country that has no barrier for its defence; and as terrifying and overwhelming, as inexpressible tempests of thunder, lightning, earthquakes, and the heaviest storms of hail, beyond all that ever was felt on the earth. In this manner shall the worshippers of the beast, and all antichristian-enemies, drink of the wrath of God, till, at length, they, together with the whole kingdom and power of Satan, shall be utterly destroyed. And who must not say that they are worthy of all this, as a just return upon them for the blood of the saints, which they have shed; and for all their abominable idolatries, and other multiplied corruptions in doctrine, worship, and manners? God will be applauded, as holy, righteous, and true, in these executions of wrath; and his church must say *Amen* to his judging thus, concerning all that oppressed and tyrannized over them during the reign of the beast! With what sudden and unexpected surprise will this tremendous day of the Lord come, like a thief in the night! Blessed are they that shall then be found upon their watch, and appear with spotless robes of righteousness and honour before him.

CHAP. XVII.

One of the seven angels, which had the seven vials, explains the meaning of the former vision of the antichristian beast that was to reign 1260 *years, and then to be destroyed, whom he describes under the figure of a great whore sitting on many waters, and on a scarlet beast, attired in purple and scarlet and other deckings, and bearing the name of Mystery,* Babylon *the great, the mother of harlots and abominations of the earth,* 1,—6. *Interprets the mystery of the woman, and the beast that had seven heads and ten horns, and of the many waters on which she sat, who is overcome by the Lamb, and brought to condign punishment by means of the ten kings that had supported her,* 7,—18.

TEXT.

AND there came one of the seven angels which had the seven vials, and talked with me, saying unto me, Come hither, I will shew unto thee the judgment of the great whore, that sitteth

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions, one of the seven angels, who were employed as ministers of justice to pour out the seven cups of divine wrath upon antichrist, came forth and communed in a familiar manner with me, as an angel of the Lord formerly did with the prophet *Zechariah*, (chap. i. 9, *&c.*) to explain who, and what were meant by the representations which had been made of her, saying to me, Come near, and I will give you an account of her

sitteth upon many waters;

sins, and of God's righteous proceedings in condemning and punishing her, who may fitly be compared to a great strumpet, that *says in her heart, I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow;* (chap. xviii. 7.) and sits with magnificent pomp and power, ease, luxury, and allurements, on the surface of many waters, the emblem of her jurisdiction over many nations and people: The more particular meaning of which I shall soon set before you. (*ver.* 15,—18.)

2 With whom the kings of the earth have committed fornication, and the inhabiters of the earth have been made drunk with the wine of her fornication.

2 The reason of her being called *the great whore* is; because, like a lewd woman, she has enticed the princes and governors of the *Roman* empire to commit idolatry with her, which is spiritual fornication, or adultery; and the carnally minded people of the earth, as well as their rulers, have been intoxicated with her wicked arts and allurements, such as her honours and preferments, external pomp of habits, processions and worship, pretended miracles, dispensations and pardons, and other specious motives, to draw men into a compliance with her idolatrous principles and practices, as if they had been overcome with strong wine, or had been bewitched with love-potions, to inflame the vicious inclinations of her *paramours* or sweet-hearts.

3 So he carried me away in the spirit into the wilderness: and I saw a woman sit upon a scarlet-coloured beast, full of names of blasphemy, having seven heads, and ten horns.

3 The angel thereupon conducted me, not corporally, but in a vision of the spirit, into a place of solitude or retirement, that I might the better observe and contemplate the state of this antichristian power, during its tyranny over the church in the wilderness; (*chap.* xii. 6.) and there I beheld the representation of a woman, or the great antichristian whore, (*ver.* 1.) as sitting upon a beast of scarlet-colour, in allusion to the scarlet robes which the *Roman* emperors wore in time of war, to denote her cruel persecutions, and her ascendency over the civil powers of the Empire, for supporting her authority and her sanguinary laws and executions. This papal government bore many inscriptions, which set forth the blasphemous titles of idolatry, infallibility, and supremacy, that it would assume, or be called and known by; and it had a monstrous appearance of seven heads and ten horns, according to the representation made of it in my former vision. (*Chap.* xiii. 1.)

4 And the woman was arrayed in purple, and scarlet-colour, and decked with gold and precious stones, and pearls, having a golden cup in her hand, full of abominations,

4 And the lewd woman herself, meaning the ecclesiastical power of the Pope, that sat upon, and was supported by the civil power signified by the beast, was apparelled with gay and sumptuous raiment of purple and scarlet dye; which may be considered as a prophetic emblem of the Pope and his cardinals, who are stained with the blood of martyrs, and the colours of whose habits are purple and scarlet:

minations, and filthiness of her fornication.

let: And she was adorned with rich and glittering ornaments of gold and precious stones and pearls, as emblems of her wealth, grandeur, and sovereignty; which may point to the imperial authority, and to the vast pomp of the *Romish* church, and the extravagant profusion of its treasures in adorning its temples, relics, and images, to procure the veneration of carnal minds: She was also represented like the ancient *Babylon*, (Jer. li. 7.) as having a golden cup in her hand to entice her devotees to drink of it; which, notwithstanding its fair tempting appearance, was filled with all manner of abominable errors and iniquities, and with the loathsome impurities of idolatry, or spiritual fornication, and adultery in those that profess espousals to Christ; and may point at the delusive charms of popery in its gaudy shows, and bold pretences to miracles, pardons, and indulgences, and to being the only true church, and the like, as lures to bring people into her bosom.

5 And upon her forehead *was* a name written, MYSTERY, BABYLON THE GREAT, THE MOTHER OF HARLOTS, AND ABOMINATIONS OF THE EARTH.

5 And upon this strumpet's forehead was an inscription that bore her name, by which she may easily be known and distinguished from all others; a name importing her to be a MYSTERY OF INIQUITY, (2 *Thess.* ii. 7.) for the depth, secrecy, and unsearchable methods of carrying on her wicked designs;* and in a figurative or mystical sense BABYLON THE GREAT, meaning the apostate church of *Rome;* which may be so styled, as she pretends to be the catholic church, and resembles *Babylon* of old, in the large extent of her jurisdiction, and in idolatry, pride, luxury, and oppression: She is the MOTHER, the parent, ringleader, patroness, supporter, and nourisher of both literal and spiritual adultery and fornication, and of all ABOMINABLE UNCLEANNESS, and every other sort of notorious crimes, which abound in the nations of the earth, that are under her dominion.

6 And I saw the woman drunken with the blood of the saints, and with the blood of the martyrs of Jesus: and when I saw her, I wondered with great admiration.

6 And I further beheld this whorish woman to be filled, and glutted with the blood of those whom God had set apart for himself and sanctified by his Spirit, and of Christ's faithful witnesses, who sealed their testimony to him with their blood, which she shed on account of their open confession of him: And when I saw her in these unnatural and monstrous forms, I was exceedingly amazed at her grandeur and cruelty, and at the patience of God in suffering her to reign and tyrannize over his beloved people; as not knowing

NOTE.

* *Scaliger*, *Downham*, and others, observe, that the word *mystery* was formerly wrote on the Pope's mitre, till the *Protestants* alledged this passage of scripture to prove that the Church of *Rome* was *antichrist*.

ing what to think of one that would sustain such a pompous, vile, and hideous character.

7 And the angel said unto me, Wherefore didst thou marvel? I will tell thee the mystery of the woman, and of the beast that carrieth her, which hath the seven heads and ten horns.

7 Hereupon the angel observing it, said to me, Why did you seem to be so greatly astonished and confounded at this representation? I will explain the meaning of these emblems, which are so dark and mysterious to you, concerning this whorish woman, and the beast she rides upon, and which appear in this vision, according to what you had seen before, (*chap.* xiii. 1.) as having seven heads and ten horns. That which is figured out in this prophetic description is as follows:

8 The beast that thou sawest, was, and is not; and shall ascend out of the bottomless pit, and go into perdition; and they that dwell on the earth shall wonder, (whose names were not written in the book of life from the foundation of the world,) when they behold the beast that was, and is not, and yet is.

8 The beast, which you saw, is a symbol of the *Roman* empire, as anciently governed by *kings*, *consuls*, *dictators*, *decemvirs*, and *military tribunes*, but is no longer subsisting in either of those forms, it being now, at the time of this vision, under the government of *emperors*; or when the time comes, which the vision refers to, it may then be said, that the beast, signifying the *Roman* empire, was idolatrous and persecuting under *heathen magistrates*, but its *Pagan state* is now destroyed; and the Empire, headed by the *Papacy*, will be of such a diabolical, wicked, and tyrannical temper, as derives its original, and proceeds from the infernal malignant spirits of the bottomless pit, and will be supported by their instigation and assistance: But, at length, the papal church, which had been destructive to the true church of Christ on earth, shall be utterly destroyed and sent down to hell, to share in torments with their instigators: And (excepting those, whom God has *chosen in Christ before the foundation of the world*, (Eph. i. 4. and see the note on 1 John i. 1.) and who are as particularly known by name as if they were literally registered for eternal life in the book of his decrees, and in the book of the Lamb, as persons that were given of the Father to him, to be redeemed, and sanctified, and saved by him) the inhabitants of the popish territories will gaze with admiration, pleasure, and superstitious veneration, when they shall see this beast, which in the forementioned senses was, and is not *, and yet exists in another form, and will be the same, in effect, as a persecuting and idolatrous paganizing power, which, in resemblance of the worship of *heathen*

NOTE.

* The conjectures about the meaning of this phrase, *the beast which was, and is not, and yet is*, or *and shall be*, (και παρ εσται) as *Steven*'s and the *Alexandrian*, and several other copies have it, are so many and dubious, that it is hard to say which of them may be depended upon. But one or other of the two senses given in the paraphrase, appears to me as probable as any; and the reader is left to chuse that which pleases him best.

idols, will introduce the worship of angels, saints, and images.

9 And here *is* the mind which hath wisdom. The seven heads are seven mountains, on which the woman sitteth.

9 And here is a proper trial and exercise for a studious and inquisitive mind, that has a faculty of discerning, and spiritual wisdom to understand, reflect upon, and compare the representation of characters, which are given in the preceding and following parts of this vision, as a key to open the meaning of it. It is therefore carefully to be observed and considered, that the seven heads of this idolatrous persecuting power, signified by *the beast*, are emblematical of the seven mountains or hills, on which, as is notorious, the city of *Rome* is built, and on which, as on an imperial seat, the great whorish woman is represented as fixing her throne, with as much power and authority as any ruler of the Empire that had ever gone before her.

10 And there are seven kings: five are fallen, and one is, *and* the other is not yet come; and when he cometh he must continue a short space.

10 And for a further understanding of this Romish antichristian-power, it is to be observed, as another distinguishing character of it, that there will have been seven kings, or different forms of supreme government, which are also signified by seven heads; five of which at the time of this vision are abolished, as they consisted of a succession of *kings*, *consuls*, &c. according to what has been hinted; (*ver.* 8.) and one, even that of Pagan imperial government, is at this present time subsisting; * And another which is to succeed it, namely, that of the Christian emperors, has not yet mounted the throne; and, when this arises, it will continue but for a little while, compared with the other supreme powers that went before, and will follow after it; which may be considered as pointing to *Constantine the Great*, and his successors, under whom the Christian religion was established, and maintained with purity scarce a century and a half; all which forms of government are to cease, in their order, before *that* shall appear, which is intended by the antichristian beast in this prophetic emblem.

11 And

NOTE.

* *Kings* in prophetic style signify *states* or *kingdoms*, as appears from *Dan.* vii. 17, 23.; and if, with several learned commentators, we take the *sixth* king to denote *simply* the imperial form of government, the powers of which were the same under *Pagan* and *Christian* emperors; then, as Mr. *Lowman* thinks, the *seventh* head may point at the reign of the *Gothic* kings, or at the exarchate of *Ravenna*, which succeeded the destruction of the imperial government, and was in some respects a new form of government different from that, and yet retained so much of its senatorial form, as to make it in that respect much of the same kind with the *sixth*: So that in some respects, according to this and another way of reckoning, as in the paraphrase, it may be called a *seventh* head or form of government; and in that way of reckoning the papal beast may be called the *eighth*; and yet on other accounts the beast may be reckoned the *seventh*, as succeeding to the *sixth*, or the imperial form of government.

11 And the beast that was, and is not, even he is the eighth, and is of the seven, and goeth into perdition.

11 And the *Roman* civil power, on which the scarlet whore appeared to sit, (*ver.* 3.) and which, as has been said, (*ver.* 8.) was anciently administered in various forms of government, and at the time of this vision is not subsisting in either of those forms, but shall hereafter rise as an idolatrous power under her influence. This may be reckoned an *eighth* form of supreme government, in case you consider *that* under *Constantine the Great*, and his successors as the *seventh*. But if you consider the imperial government of *Constantine* and his successors as truly *Christian*, and so no head of *idolatry*, as all the preceding governments were; then the *Roman* power, signified by the beast, is to be reckoned only one of the *seven*, even the last of them in succession; and so points out the papacy, which is to have its seat at *Rome*, with the Pope and his consistory of cardinals at the head of it, and all the civil power of the Empire to support it; which will as certainly, in God's appointed and predicted time, be finally destroyed, as all the idolatrous heads have been in their order, that went before it.

12 And the ten horns, which thou sawest, are ten kings, which have received no kingdom as yet; but receive power as kings one hour with the beast.

12 And another sure note of the antichristian power is, that the ten horns, which you saw on the head of the papal beast, (*ver.* 3.) signify ten kings or principalities, that shall arise in the western part of the Roman empire, as to be divided into ten kingdoms; but none of these potentates have received their distinct kingdoms at the time of this vision, but shall receive them as sovereign princes, about the same time *, that the papal beast or antichristian power shall begin to erect its idolatrous empire; which may be considered as an intimation, that the rise of the Pope should be at the time when the Empire would be divided into ten kingdoms by the barbarous nations, about the middle of the fifth century, soon after *Gensericus*, the *Vandal*, had taken *Rome;* and so *the man of sin*, would be revealed, when the Empire, *that let* or *hindered*, while it was under one head, should be taken away. (2 *Thess.* ii. 3,—8.)

13 These

NOTE.

* Most expositors, after Dr. *More*, render *one hour* (μιαν ωραν) *the same time*, as in *ver.* 13, 17. *one mind* (μιαν γνωμην) plainly signifies *the same mind*, and so *one heart, and one soul*, (η καρδια και η ψυχη μια) Acts iv. 32. signifies *the same heart and soul*. And the word rendered *hour* (ωρα) is often used for and translated *time*. This makes the division of the Empire into the ten kingdoms contemporary with the rise of the beast.—— These ten kingdoms are variously reckoned up by Mr. *Mede* and Sir *Isaac Newton:* But others suppose that there is no necessity of finding out that exact number of different kingdoms, neither more nor less; *ten* being sometimes put for *many*, a certain for an uncertain number. However, all history assures us, that when the northern nations broke in upon the Western Empire, it was divided into much about that number of kingdoms.

13 These have one mind, and shall give their power and strength unto the beast.

13 These ten kingdoms, with sovereign princes at their head, how different soever they may be in secular interests, will be of the same mind in religious concerns, and, as with one heart, agree to pay homage to the papal power, signified by the beast, and to surrender up their riches, arms, and authority (ἐξουσιαν) to his will, and use them to support his supremacy and idolatrous interests and designs.

14 These shall make war with the Lamb, and the Lamb shall overcome them: for he is Lord of lords, and King of kings; and they that are with him, *are* called, and chosen, and faithful.

14 These, under the influence of the papal beast, will set themselves against Christ, to oppose his doctrines, institutions, cause, interest, and people, by violent persecutions, and the power of the sword, and to force their consciences into submission, and blind obedience to the pretended infallibility and ecclesiastical authority, superstition, and idolatry of the Pope. But, in the issue of the combat, the glorious Lamb of God shall be victorious over them, in and by means of the stedfastness of the faith, profession, and patient sufferings of his members, who will make a noble stand against all their enemies, and love not their lives unto death: For he by nature as God, and by constitution as Mediator, is the sovereign Lord of all earthly lords, and sovereign King over all the potentates of this world; as the government of the church and of all nations is upon his shoulders, to order and dispose of them according to his infinitely wise and holy will: And his disciples, who side with him against those common enemies, are effectually called by his grace; are a chosen and peculiar people, whom God has set apart for himself in his eternal purpose; and, in consequence of their election and effectual calling, are made sincere and faithful to him in their profession of his name and gospel, and perseverance in his ways and ordinances, whatever it may cost them.

15 And he saith unto me, The waters which thou sawest, where the whore sitteth, are peoples, and multitudes, and nations, and tongues.

15 And still further to explain the distinguishing marks of the antichristian whore, the angel said to me, The representation that was made of *many waters*, on which she sits, (*ver.* 1.) are an emblem of the people of the papacy under her extensive empire, and of the vast multitude of them of different nations and various languages, over which she reigns as a queen, and by which she is supported in her dominion, riches, and grandeur; and says, she *shall see no sorrow.* (Chap. xviii. 7.)

16 And the ten horns which thou sawest upon the beast,

16 And yet the *ten horns*, which were represented in your vision of the beast, and have been interpreted to signify ten distinct states or kingdoms, (*ver.* 12.) and which, amidst all the revolutions and alterations

beast, these shall hate the whore, and shall make her desolate, and naked, and shall eat her flesh, and burn her with fire.

that may be made in them *, will subsist under such like distinct governments, during the reign of the beast, and never be swallowed up in a universal monarchy by any that may aspire after it: Even these very nations or kingdoms, with their respective potentates, which were before engaged in the support and advancement of the whorish woman, shall, in God's appointed time, grow weary of her tyranny, oppressions, frauds, and abominable corruptions in doctrine and practice; and, when they come to see how grossly she had imposed upon them, they shall be incensed against and abhor her, more than they ever before were in love with her; even as gallants use to behave toward a strumpet, when they are convinced of her treacherous delusions, and of the evil of their former familiarities with her: And they shall withdraw their protection of her, and turn their arms against her, and strip her naked of all her riches, pomp, and power, and lay her waste by fire and sword, which shall not only destroy her, but be as tormenting to her, as though they were to gnaw her flesh off from her bones, and burn her to death by devouring flames, as was foretold by the prophet *Daniel*, (chap. vii. 11.) and as the daughter of a priest guilty of whoredom was to be burnt. (*Lev.* xxi. 9.)

17 For God hath put in their hearts to fulfil his will, and to agree, and give their kingdom unto the beast, until the words of God shall be fulfilled.

17 For the great God and Governor of the world, *in whose hand are the hearts of kings*, and who *turns them whithersoever he will*, (Prov. xxi. 1.) has determined to give them up, for a time, to their own hearts lusts, which they freely and out of choice indulged; (see the notes on *John* xii. 40. and *Rom.* ix. 18.) He also, by an over-ruling providence, turned the voluntary current of their own sinful inclinations into such a course, as should eventually accomplish his purpose, relating to the rise and progress of the papal power; and he permitted them, under the instigation of Satan and the workings of their own corruptions, to agree together to submit to its authority,

NOTE.

* The *states* or *kingdoms*, signified by the *ten horns*, are to be, at length, the instruments of the *ruin*, as they formerly were of the *support* of antichrist. This supposes a continued succession of *distinct* nations, that originally belonged to the *Roman* empire; though there may be shiftings and changes in them, and they may not always be bounded just in the same limits as at the first division of the Empire among them. (See the note on *ver.* 12.) And so the kings *that shall hate the whore*, &c. are to be considered, not as the same individual persons that at first supported her, but as their *successors* in various kingdoms, who will turn against her, as those of the reformed nations have already; and it is to be expected that most, if not all the rest, will follow their example, and unite with them in a religious war against the papacy; though, perhaps, some of them may persist in her idolatrous communion, till they shall see the time of her burning, and bewail her; (*chap.* xviii. 9.) and then shall either renounce her, or all with her.

rity, superstition, and idolatry, and to surrender up their strength, riches, and even their crowns, to the service of this antichristian beast: But he did this only for a limited season, till all the words of God, contained in this and ancient prophecies, relating to the flourishing state of its dominion, shall be fulfilled; and then, by a gracious and providential influence, or both, upon their hearts, he will incline them to accomplish the will of his command and pleasure, as well as the will of his purpose, relating to the utter destruction of the idolatrous power which they supported before. (*ver.* 16.)

18 And the woman which thou sawest, is that great city, which reigneth over the kings of the earth.

18 And, to conclude, the plain marks of this antichristian power, relating to *the place* of its chief residence, The appearance of a whorish drunken woman, which you saw and so much wondered at, (*ver.* 5, 6.) represents the civil and ecclesiastical authority and dominion of the Pope and his consistory of cardinals, that is to be seated in, and raised to its height at *Rome*, the great metropolis; which, and no other, is at this very time to be considered as the mistress of the world, which bears sway over the kings of the earth, and particularly over the nations of the Empire, that hath existed under various successive forms of government, but is now imperial, as the Pope's also, in a manner, will be in reigning over all the kingdoms into which the Empire will then be divided.

RECOLLECTIONS.

How plain are the prophetic marks of the idolatrous and persecuting power of the papacy! *This* in a spiritual sense is the great whore, who makes blasphemous pretences; and is decked with sumptuous ornaments; whose distinguishing colours of purple and scarlet are the attire of Popes and Cardinals; who has intoxicated princes and people to join in her idolatries, and has glutted herself with the blood of numberless saints and witnesses for Christ: She is a mystery of iniquity; the very image of ancient *Babylon* for pride and luxury, persecution and idolatry; and is the grand parent of spiritual fornication, and of all abominable iniquity: She derives her original from hell itself; and is the great beast, that reigns over vast multitudes of people of all nations, and draws the admiration of all under her dominion, except those that are chosen of God to eternal life: Her seat of empire is at the great city of *Rome*, which is built upon seven hills, and was the metropolis of the *Roman* monarchy: She rose as the seventh idolatrous and persecuting head, after the destruction of those that preceded her, under various forms of government, in the *Roman* empire; upon the division of which into ten kingdoms, she set up her throne with supreme authority, making use of their strength, as ten horns of power to support and defend her ecclesiastical tyranny; and she, by divine permission, seduced them into a compliance with her cruel and idolatrous usurpations, and into a furious opposition to Christ, his people, and cause. To whom can all these descriptions agree, but to the *Romish* papal power? How amazingly monstrous, and yet just, is this divine portrait of her! And how great a part of wisdom is it to find her out, by applying these characters to her, to whom alone they belong! But O what a comfort ought it to be to the church of Christ, and what a terror to the antichristian harlot, that she, who has been so destructive to others, shall finally go into perdition! The glorious Lamb, who is King of kings, and Lord of lords, shall overcome her, by animating the faith and patience, and emboldening the holy profession of those that are chosen and called, and faith-

ful in their adherence to him; and in his appointed time he will turn the hearts of those very powers against her, that were before in love with her, and united all their forces to uphold her. He will spirit them up to desert, hate, and oppose her; to strip her of all her riches and grandeur; and to prey upon her, and pursue her with fire and sword, till she be utterly destroyed by as painful a death, as if her flesh were to be gnawn off from her bones, and she to be consumed, as by devouring fire, in the conflagration of *Rome*, and by the total ruin of all the territories under her dominion.

CHAP. XVIII.

Another angel from heaven proclaims the fall of mystical Babylon, 1,—3. *And another voice from heaven admonishes the people of God to come out of her, lest, partaking of her sins, they partake also of her plagues*, 4,—8. *Represents the lamentation of kings, merchants, and mariners over her*, 9,—19. *And calls upon the church to rejoice in God's taking righteous vengeance upon her, who had slain the saints; and whose utter and irrecoverable ruin is signified by the emblem of a millstone thrown with violence by a mighty angel into the sea*, 20,—24.

TEXT.

AND after these things I saw another angel come down from heaven, having great power; and the earth was lightened with his glory.

2 And he cried mightily with a strong voice, saying, Babylon the great is fallen, is fallen, and is become the habitation of devils, and the hold of every foul spirit, and a cage of every unclean and hateful bird.

PARAPHRASE.

AND after the explication that had been given me in the last vision of the woman, and the scarlet-coloured beast on which she sat, I beheld another angel descending from heaven in most illustrious splendor *, as dispatched with an immediate commission from thence, and invested with great power and authority; and the church on earth was irradiated with his surrounding light and glory, like what appeared to *Ezekiel* in his vision of the glory of the God of *Israel*, which filled the house of the Lord. (*Chap.* xliii. 2,—5.)

2 And he proclaimed with an exceeding majestic, loud, and articulate voice, saying, in the very words that foretold, and were accomplished in the destruction of the *Chaldean-Babylon*, (Isa. xxi. 8.) to this effect, The papal hierarchy and power, which for persecution, pride, idolatry, and all manner of abominations, may fitly be styled mystical *Babylon*, whose dominion is with great authority and wide extent, will soon be as certainly destroyed, as if it already were actually fallen from all its riches, grandeur, and power, into the most deplorable ruins: And to certify this with the greater vehemence and assurance, he repeated the words, *is fallen, is fallen;* and

NOTE.

* This *angel* seems to have been *Christ*, the Angel of the covenant, with whose *glory the earth was lightened;* since it certainly was the glory of the Jehovah of *Israel* that lightened the earth, and filled his house, in *Ezekiel*'s vision, of which this bears a resemblance. (See the notes on *chap.* vii. 2. and viii. 3.)

and added that, instead of her former pomp and splendor, she shall be as hideous and desolate, as the most depopulated and forlorn desart, that is haunted by demons or satyrs, and all unclean spirits, which use to rove about in such places; (*Luke* xi. 24.) and that is the receptacle of doleful creatures, such as screech-owls, cormorants, and bitterns, and all sorts of loathsome fowls, which usually dwell in horrid ruins and solitary wildernesses, and make a dismal noise, according to what was denounced against ancient *Babylon*. (Isa. xiii. 19,—22. and xiv. 23.)

3 For all nations have drunk of the wine of the wrath of her fornication, and the kings of the earth have committed fornication with her, and the merchants of the earth are waxed rich through the abundance of her delicacies.

3 For all nations under her jurisdiction have been intoxicated by her idolatries, that expose her to, and will bring down upon her the dreadful vengeance of God, which she deserves, and must suffer, for her spiritual fornication: And she has not only been guilty of this abominable crime herself; but the earthly kings, who had given their power to the beast, (*chap.* xvii. 17.) have been prevailed upon, by her inchantments, to support, and join with her in idolatrous worship, which is spiritual whoredom; and carnally-minded men, under her dominion, that deal in her pretended spiritual wares, especially at *Rome*, such as pardons, indulgences, dispensations, and popish trinkets, *&c.* and that make merchandise of mens souls, (*ver.* 13.) have amassed together immense riches through the strong enticements of her spiritual commodities, which have been sold at high rates, and brought in vast gains, to feed their own and her luxury.

4 And I heard another voice from heaven saying, Come out of her, my people, that ye be not partakers of her sins, and that ye receive not of her plagues:

4 Hereupon, I heard another solemn proclamation immediately from the throne of God in heaven, saying, in his love, care, and tenderness to those that belong to him, but are mingled with this apostate church, in like manner as he warned *Israel* to flee from the old *Babylon*, when it was to be destroyed, (*Isa.* xlviii. 20. and lii. 11. and *Jer.* l. 8. and li. 6.) Depart, my people, and be ye separate from this mystical *Babylon;* touch no unclean thing; but flee with all speed from it, and openly protest against it, that ye may have no communion with, nor so much as connive at her idolatrous and wicked practices, and so be partakers of her guilt; and that ye may not be involved with her in the dreadful judgments and desolations which are now coming upon her in the effusion of the *seventh* and last great vial of my wrath, according to the representation that has been made of it, (*chap.* xvi. 17,—21.) as the just punishment of all her sins.

5 For her sins have reached unto heaven,

5 For the multitude of her iniquities are of such an enormous size, of so high aggravations, and long continuance,

heaven, and God hath remembered her iniquities.

continuance, as have made her fully ripe for judgment: Their provoking cry, like the sins of *Sodom*, and the ancient *Babylon*, (Gen. xix. 13. and Jer. li. 9.) have reached up to heaven; and God is now in his awful and terrible justice coming forth to call them to remembrance, and to execute complete vengeance upon her for them.

6 Reward her even as she rewarded you, and double unto her double, according to her works: in the cup which she hath filled, fill to her double.

6 This is the time for you, my servants and people, to repay tribulation and distress to her, by fire and sword, in a righteous war against her, as the due reward of her cruel persecutions and oppressions of you, and your faithful predecessors in former ages, according to the law of retaliation; (*Exod.* xxi. 23, 24.) and ye are commissioned from heaven to multiply calamities doubly upon her, to her utter destruction, not from a spirit of private revenge, but as authorised instruments of divine justice, in punishing her to the uttermost for all her evil deeds, according to the law which, in cases of robbery, required double restitution; (*Exod.* xxii. 4, 7, 9.) and according to God's threatning of *Israel*'s enemies, that he *would recompence their iniquity and their sin double:* (Jer. xvi. 18.) As she has wrung out, and made you drink the cup of sorrow and affliction; so now ye are called to fill out to her a cup of doubly bitter and deadly ingredients, for her to drink to the very dregs.

7 How much she hath glorified herself, and lived deliciously, so much torment and sorrow give her: for she saith in her heart, I sit a queen, and am no widow, and shall see no sorrow.

7 In proportion to her pride and self-confidence, in which she has magnified and exalted herself, and to her luxurious way of living, render to her tormenting misery and anguish, in her utter confusion and overthrow: For she, being the whore on many waters, (*chap.* xvii. 15.) proudly boasts of her dominion over a multitude of people and nations in church and state, and flatters herself in her own conceit, saying, in her vain and haughty mind, like *Babylon* of old, which was called *the Lady of kingdoms*, (Isa. xlvii. 5, 8.) I sit with imperial majesty, pomp, and safety, after the manner of a mighty queen in her most exalted state and firmest establishment; and I neither am bereaved of any dignity, power, or pleasure, like a widow deprived of her defence and strength, glory and comfort in the loss of her husband; nor shall my throne ever be shaken, or any kind of tribulation come upon me.

8 Therefore shall her plagues come in one day, death, and mourning, and famine: and she shall be utterly burnt with fire: for strong *is* the Lord

8 Because she is thus insolent and vain-glorious, and fondly imagines that no mischief or danger can approach her; therefore shall her punishment and ruin come unexpectedly, and all on a sudden, as it were in one day, upon her; as was said of the ancient *Babylon:* (Isa. xlvii. 9, 11.) Death, by pestilence, or sword, or both, shall cut off multitudes of her subjects;

Lord God who judgeth her.

jects; and lamentation and mourning for the loss of her children, and destruction by famine, or the want of all necessary refreshment and support, shall meet upon her; and she shall be utterly consumed by fire: (*chap.* xvii. 16.) For the Lord Jehovah, who righteously judges and condemns her, and has determined to destroy her, is almighty; so that there is no resisting his power, who is able to execute the decreed vengeance, and will certainly do it.

9 And the kings of the earth, who have committed fornication, and lived deliciously with her, shall bewail her, and lament for her, when they shall see the smoke of her burning,

9 And so absolute and unavoidable shall her destruction be, that the earthly-minded princes and potentates of this world, who, continuing under her jurisdiction and in her communion, have complied with and supported her idolatrous injunctions and practices, and indulged themselves in pomp and luxury with her, shall not be able to give her any further assistance, or protection; but shall bitterly mourn over her helpless state, and lament her doleful distress and ruin, when they shall behold the sad tokens of her torment and desolation, as appearing like horrid pillars of smoke, that rise up from a raging fire in the conflagration of cities * ; and especially when they see *Rome* itself, the seat of her dominion, all in flames through the righteous vengeance of God upon her.

10 Standing afar off for the fear of her torment, saying, Alas, alas, that great city Babylon, that mighty city! for in one hour is thy judgment come.

10 They being dismayed at this awful judgment, and terribly afraid lest they should fall with her in the common calamity, and so partake of her plagues, as they had of her sins, will endeavour to get as far as possible out of the way of danger; and standing at a distance, like spectators full of confusion and astonishment, will cry out in the anguish of their souls, Alas! alas! What dreadful and unexpected wo and misery is this! What desolation and distress is that great city, which is called mystical *Babylon*, that strong and powerful city, now brought into! What is become of all her authority, pomp, and dominion, which are fallen with her! What an amazing revolution is here! For all on a sudden, as it were in one hour, that was little thought of before, thy judgment, condemnation, and execution, are come upon thee, O thou mistress of the papal world, who *satest as a queen* in

NOTE.

* *The smoke of her torment*, may be taken, as in the paraphrase, either in the *metaphorical* sense to signify the most dreadful and entire destruction of all her pomp and power, through the whole extent of the papacy; or in the *literal* sense for the conflagration of *Rome*, the seat of the Pope's authority, and the capital city of his dominion, which will, probably, be destroyed, either by subterraneous fires bursting out of the *volcanos*, that are frequent in those parts; or by the fire of enemies in besieging it, when the ten kings shall *hate the whore, and burn her with fire*; (chap. xvii. 16.) or by fire immediately from heaven, like that which consumed *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*.

in all thy grandeur and boasted security, *saying, I shall see no sorrow.* (ver. 7.)

11 And the merchants of the earth shall weep and mourn over her, for no man buyeth their merchandise any more:

11 And as the merchants bewailed the destruction of ancient *Tyre*, that mighty flourishing and trading city; (*Ezek.* xxvii. 37, *&c.*) so the earthly-minded dealers in the spiritual merchandize of antichristian *Rome*, to put off her indulgences, absolutions, popish relics, and preferments, will, in the grief of their hearts, lament with weeping over her, as not being able to afford her any relief in the day of her distress, nor to get any further advantages by her; because there will then be an entire end of all her gainful traffic; and from thence-forward none will ever be so imposed upon and deluded, as to purchase her ecclesiastical commodities any more.

12 The merchandise of gold, and silver, and precious stones, and of pearls, and fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, and all thyine wood, and all manner vessels of ivory, and all manner vessels of most precious wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble,

12 So that they can no longer delight and pride themselves in the prodigious gains that they were wont to make by this sort of merchandise *: It will never bring them in, as formerly, gold and silver, and precious stones, and pearls, to enrich themselves, and to support and display the splendor of their hierarchy and worship; nor fine linen, and purple, and silk, and scarlet, to adorn themselves, and make distinguishing vestments for their priests, bishops, cardinals, and popes; nor thyine-wood, so much esteemed for its grateful scent and durable strength, for building or decorating magnificent houses and temples; nor any of those various sorts of vessels made of ivory, and of the most beautiful and costly wood, and of brass, and iron, and marble, which used to be wrought into idolatrous images, and into all manner of utensils for superstitious services and ornaments.

13 And cinnamon, and odours, and ointments, and frankincense, and wine, and oil, and fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, and horses,

13 Nor shall their merchandise any longer procure to them fragrant cinnamon, and sweet odours, and ointments, and frankincense, to gratify their senses, and perfume and beautify their bodies, or to feed their pride and luxury, and make their sweet-smelling incense and costly ointments for idolatrous and superstitious purposes; nor wine and oil, to cheer their hearts

NOTE.

* The description given in this and the following verses of the *merchandise* and *lamented destruction* of the *Romish Babylon*, need not in all particulars be taken in a *literal*, but only in an *accommodated* sense, like what is is suggested in the paraphrase; and may be considered as a strong and striking figurative representation of her downfal from all her former state and affluence; and of the horrible disappointment, loss, and trouble, which by that means will come upon the popish traffickers, in her egregious impositions and delusions, who had amassed to themselves vast riches and honours in the days of her prosperity: And this is beautifully described in most of the very same terms that are used in the 26th and 27th chapters of *Ezekiel*, with relation to *Tyre*, which had been notorious for idolatry, wickedness, and power, and for the most gainful and extensive merchandise.

horses, and chariots, and slaves, and souls of men.

hearts and make their faces shine, or to be idolatrously and superstitiously used in the sacrifice of the mass, and in extreme unction; nor fine flour, and wheat, and beasts, and sheep, to be tithed by the priests for the sustenance of nature, or supplying them with the necessaries, much less the conveniences and comforts of the animal life; nor horses and chariots, and (σωματων) the bodies of men to furnish out a pompous equipage, and show away with the magnificence of haughty popes and prelates; nor shall they any more enslave mens souls by usurping a tyrannical power over their consciences, and drawing money from them for pardons and indulgences, and for praying them out of purgatory, which, in reality, is being paid for destroying, instead of saving their souls.

14 And the fruits that thy soul lusted after are departed from thee, and all things which were dainty and goodly are departed from thee, and thou shalt find them no more at all.

14 And the products of your iniquitous merchandise, O mystical *Babylon*, in which you so much gloried, and of which you were so eagerly desirous, such as the riches, honours, and pleasures of this world, which were the top of your ambition; all these are now cut off: And all things that were delicious to the taste, and made a gay appearance to the eye, are now removed far from you, who shall never find your account in them any more; but shall be entirely stript, and remain destitute of them all, past retrieve for ever. Thus all the merchandise of antichristian *Rome*, by the factors of her spurious wares, shall, like that of the ancient wicked *Tyre*, utterly fail, and never be recovered.

15 The merchants of these things, which were made rich by her, shall stand afar off, for the fear of her torment, weeping and wailing,

15 They that dealt in these commodities, and were enriched in their *temporal*, and vainly boasted of their being so in their *spiritual* concerns, by her means, shall, like the kings of the earth, (*ver.* 9, 10.) unable to help her, remove and keep at as great a distance as may be from her, for fear that, as they had been partakers of her guilt and riches, they should share in torments with her; at the very sight of which, they will vent the sorrows of their hearts with floods of tears, and great lamentation over her.

16 And saying, Alas, alas, that great city, that was clothed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and decked with gold, and precious stones, and pearls! for in one hour so great riches is come to nought.

16 And crying out, with bitter astonishment and condolence, will say, Alas! alas! How tremendous is the destruction of *Rome*, that great and famous city, where the head of the papacy, who *said in her heart, I sit a queen, and shall see no sorrow*, (ver. 7.) had her imperial seat; and in the height of her pomp, power, and riches, was sumptuously arrayed in fine linen, and purple, and scarlet, and set off with the glittering ornaments of gold, and all manner of precious stones, and pearls! Her case is extremely deplorable: For all on a sudden, as though it were in one unexpected and unthought-of hour, she is divested of all

her rich treasures, and reduced to the utmost poverty and distress.

17 And every ship-master, and all the company in ships, and sailors, and as many as trade by sea, stood afar off,

17 And the lower ranks of her officers, that were devoted to her service, and retailed her pardons and indulgences, and other trumpery, and compassed sea and land to make proselytes, such as priests, monks, friars, and Jesuits, who got their living by this trade, and may be represented, in allusion to the lamenters of *Tyre*'s ruin, (*Ezek.* xxvii. 29,—33.) under the emblem of masters of ships, and all their ship-mates and mariners, and all traffickers in them by sea: All these as unable, as the kings and merchants, (*ver.* 9, 11.) to help her, shall likewise get out of the reach of her calamities, as far as they can, for fear of sharing in her punishments, as they had in her crimes and gains.

18 And when they saw the smoke of her burning, saying, What *city is* like unto this great city!

18 And when they see the dismal tokens of her utter destruction, like the thick and gloomy columns of smoke, that rise from every part of a city all in flames, (see the note on *ver.* 9.) they shall cry out with amazement, lamentation, and horror, saying, as was said of *Tyre*, (Ezek. xxvii. 32.) What city so grand and magnificent, wealthy, powerful, and proud, was ever so entirely and speedily involved in misery and ruin, as this great city, together with her vast dominion, is, beyond all that could have been imagined!

19 And they cast dust on their heads, and cried, weeping and wailing, saying, Alas, alas, that great city, wherein were made rich all that had ships in the sea, by reason of her costliness! for in one hour is she made desolate.

19 And as great mourners have used, in their distress, to throw dust upon their heads, (*Josh.* vii. 6. and *Job* ii. 12.) and the bewailers of *Tyre* are represented by this token; (*Ezek.* xxvii. 30.) so these huckster of *Rome*'s wares will go into all expressions of the deepest sorrow, and cry out with weeping and bitter lamentation, Alas! alas! for that great city, as mystical *Babylon* is often styled in this prophecy, and may also be well compared to *Tyre*, (see the note on ver. 12.) How shocking are her desolations and miseries, who has been in such a flourishing state as to enrich all her devotees that carried on traffic with, and for her, in employing their vessels at sea to export her pardons, indulgences, *&c.* which were sold and purchased at costly rates by her authority! What a surprising, sudden, and miserable change is now made upon her state and condition! For she, as it were in one hour, is reduced, and spoiled of all her former wealth, power, and grandeur; utterly incapable of any further helping her servants, or of being helped by them.

20 Rejoice over her, thou heaven, and ye holy apostles and prophets, for

20 But, said the voice from heaven, (*ver.* 4) How much soever they, that trafficked and gained worldly riches and honours by her influence and authority, may sigh and mourn for her desolation; it will be a just

for God hath avenged you on her.

juſt occaſion of great joy and gladneſs to the ſaints, while they conſider it, not as the deſtruction of their *fellow-creatures*, but as the day of their own happy deliverance from the oppreſſions of this antichriſtian-enemy, and of God's glorifying himſelf in her righteous overthrow, and in erecting the glory of Chriſt's kingdom on her ruins: Triumph ye therefore over her, O church of Chriſt, both in heaven and on earth, and all ye holy apoſtles and prophets, that have miniſterially laid the foundation upon which the church is built, *Jeſus Chriſt himſelf being the chief corner-ſtone*; (Eph. ii. 20.) and be exceeding glad, O all ye faithful paſtors and teachers, whom he has ſent; and all ye interpreters of his word, whom he has raiſed up to preach and explain his pure goſpel, as his witneſſes who have propheſied in ſackcloth: (*chap.* xi. 3.) For now God has awfully diſplayed his terrible juſtice, and the truth of his predictions, (*chap.* xvi.) in taking full vengeance, for your ſakes, upon this corrupt and perſecuting power, which fain would have deſtroyed the foundation of the church itſelf, and all that are built upon it.

21 And a mighty angel took up a ſtone like a great milſtone, and caſt it into the ſea, ſaying, Thus with violence ſhall that great city Babylon be thrown down, and ſhall be found no more at all.

21 And ſtill further to confirm all this, as the prophet *Jeremiah* was ordered to bind a ſtone to the book he had read, and caſt it into the midſt of *Euphrates*, *ſaying*, *Thus ſhall* Babylon *ſink*, *and ſhall not riſe from the evil that I will bring upon her*; (Jer. li. 63, 64.) ſo a glorious angel, who excelled in ſtrength, took up, as he appeared in my viſion, a huge ſtone in his hand, like a great milſtone, and threw it with mighty force into the depth of the ſea, into which it ſuddenly ſunk, never to riſe again: And, to explain the meaning of this emblematical action, he ſaid, After this violent manner, ſhall that great city, myſtical *Babylon*, and all her power, authority, and magnificence, be ſuddenly caſt into utter deſtruction, and never ſhall be rebuilt, or recover ſtrength and dominion, or have any place in the world at all, from henceforth for ever.

22 And the voice of harpers, and muſicians, and of pipers, and trumpeters, ſhall be heard no more at all in thee; and no craftſman, of whatſoever craft *he be*, ſhall be found any more in thee; and the ſound of a milſtone ſhall be heard no more at all in thee;

22 And as to you, O myſtical *Babylon*, according to what was threatned againſt apoſtate *Iſrael*, (Jer. xxv. 10.) all your days of ſuperſtitious and civil mirth and pleaſure ſhall come to a perpetual end: No concerts of players upon harps and other muſical inſtruments, nor any melody of pipes and trumpets ſhall ever be heard in your churches, or in your merry meetings any more; and all your ſpiritual traffic and ſecular trade and buſineſs, together with all your choriſters, that adulterate the worſhip of God; and all your cunning artificers, and laborious workmen, ſuch as carpenters, and ſmiths, (*Iſa.* iii. 3. and *Jer.* xxiv. 1.)

to serve the common conveniences of mankind, shall be taken away from you; and even the necessaries of life shall fail, insomuch that the noise of a milstone, to grind the corn for food and sustenance, shall never more be heard in you.

23 And the light of a candle shall shine no more at all in thee; and the voice of the bridegroom and of the bride shall be heard no more at all in thee: for thy merchants were the great men of the earth; for by thy sorceries were all nations deceived.

23 And nothing comfortable of any kind shall ever be enjoyed any more; no, not so much as the light of a candle, to relieve the horrid darkness of the night, shall ever be seen in you again; much less shall any bridal lamp or nuptial songs, or rejoicings of a bridegroom over his bride, or propagating of families and inheritances, be ever found any more in you: For your dealers in spiritual merchandise enriched themselves, and became the great and dignified men of your earthly empire, such as cardinals and prelates, by means of the iniquitous trade which they carried on to promote your authority and influence: For, by your bewitching allurements, all nations under your dominion were imposed upon, and deluded into an admiration of, and compliance with your superstition and idolatry.

24 And in her was found the blood of prophets, and of saints, and of all that were slain upon the earth.

24 And, what greatly adds to all these provocations of mystical *Babylon*, and aggravates her crimes, condemnation, and misery, and aloud proclaims the righteousness of God's judgments upon her, is, that she has filled up the measure of the cruelties and murders, which have been practised upon the faithful ministring servants and holy people of God, and upon all that by her authority, canons, and decrees, have ever been put to death for righteousness sake, throughout her territories, and to the utmost extent of her influence upon earth, as by her persecutions she has approved of, imitated, and exceeded all that were ever known before; and so the blood of all martyrs for Christ is found in her skirts, and, by just construction, is chargeable upon her: (See *Matth.* xxiii. 29, —35.) And therefore God *has given her blood to drink, for she is worthy.* (Chap. xvi. 6.)

RECOLLECTIONS.

How certain, sudden, and irrecoverable will be the destruction of the seat of the beast at *Rome*, and of the whole papal power with her! She is the mystical *Babylon*, whose fall, as it were in one hour, was pronounced by an illustrious angel, and further confirmed by the emblem of a vast stone plunged with violence into the sea, from whence it never can rise again. How dreadful and total will her ruin be! She who flourished in pomp, luxury, and plenty, and thought she sat as a queen and should see no sorrow, shall become desolate, like a horrid uninhabited wilderness, haunted by demons, and doleful birds, and savage beasts. All her pride, riches, and luxury, shall be turned into shame, want, and misery; all her joy into mourning; and all her pleasure into torment. She shall be stript of all her greatness and sumptuous ornaments, and cut off from all the comforts, conveniences, and necessaries of life; and all ranks of people under her dominion shall be reduced to the utmost poverty and distress; and she shall be repaid with the heaviest

heavieſt vengeance from God for all the wrath that ſhe had reeked upon his faithful ſervants and people. The tokens of her torment ſhall be as viſible and affecting, as the thick and fiery ſmoke that aſcends from the ruins of a city all in flames: And when her friends that had ſupported her, and had been profited, to a greater or leſs degree, in temporal concerns, by the ſale of her indulgences and pardons, and other ſpiritual commodities, by which ſhe deceived the nations, and drew them into ſuperſtition and idolatry; when theſe ſhall ſee her ſudden, miſerable, and utter deſolation, they ſhall be aſtoniſhed, and bitterly lament over her, as unable to help her, or to be helped by her any more; and ſhall ſtrive to get as far as they can out of the way of God's judgments upon her, leſt they ſhould be ſwallowed up in her calamities, as they had been partakers of her ſins. And O how righteouſly will theſe judgments be executed upon her, whoſe enormous and multiplied iniquities are heaped up, as it were, to heaven, and cry aloud for vengeance to come down upon her! Her ſuperſtition, lewdneſs and idolatry, luxury and haughtineſs, cruelty and perſecution of the ſaints and ſervants of Chriſt; her merchandiſe of the ſouls, as well as bodies of men, to their deſtruction; her allurements of kings and nations to forſake God, and join themſelves to idols, ſhall all be remembred in his wrath, to her everlaſting confuſion. With what abhorrence ſhould all the people of God ſeparate from her communion, leſt they partake of her ſins, and of her puniſhments! And how ſhould they rejoice and triumph, in reflection that the time is coming, when God will vindicate his righteous cauſe, and avenge them, in her juſt deſtruction, and will deliver them from all her moleſtations for ever!

CHAP. XIX.

The church both in heaven and on earth triumph, and praiſe the Lord for his righteous judgments upon the great whore of Babylon, *and for the honour of their own eſpouſal to Chriſt*, 1,—8. *An angel pronounces them bleſſed, and refuſes the worſhip which* John *offered him*, 9, 10. *Then follows another viſion of Chriſt, as going forth on a white horſe at the head of his army, which is alſo mounted on white horſes, to make war againſt the beaſt and his armies, which are utterly and miſerably deſtroyed*, 11,—21.

TEXT.

AND after theſe things I heard a great voice of much people in heaven, ſaying, Alleluia; Salvation, and glory, and honour, and power unto the Lord our God:

PARAPHRASE.

AND after the preceding viſions of the total ruin of the great whore of *Babylon*, in the downfal of the papal chief city and empire, methought, I heard an exceeding loud and joyful acclamation of the heavenly church, ſaying, in obedience to the order, (*chap.* xviii. 20.) *Hallelujah, Praiſe ye the Lord;* We applaud, and call upon all the ſaints on earth to join with us in bleſſing the Lord our God for the happineſs of his people, in their complete deliverance from the corruptions and tyranny of the antichriſtian-church. The glory, honour, and power, which are conſpicuous in all God's works of creation, providence, and redemption, and particularly in this remarkably glorious diſpenſation, ought to be aſcribed, with the greateſt veneration and chearfulneſs, to his holy name.

2 For true and righteous *are* his judg-

2 For he has faithfully fulfilled his promiſes to his people, as well as proved himſelf to be true to his threatnings

judgments: for he hath judged the great whore, which did corrupt the earth with her fornication, and hath avenged the blood of his servants at her hand.

threatnings against his and their enemies; and has acted a most righteous part in the punishment he has denounced against, and inflicted upon them: For he has condemned, and executed judgment upon antichristian-*Rome*, (which may be compared to a great strumpet) and upon all her lovers, for the iniquity of her doings, and for their compliance with her allurements, who had spread idolatrous fornication throughout her territories on the earth, and thereby corrupted the religion and manners of her subjects: And now God has taken just vengeance upon her for all the blood of his saints and ministring servants, which she has unrighteously and cruelly caused to be shed, on account of their faithfulness to him; and he has requited her, in kind, according to her deserts.

3 And again they said, Alleluia. And her smoke rose up for ever and ever.

3 And they repeated their Hallelujahs,* beginning, carrying on, and ending their song, with joyous and triumphant thanksgivings and praises, for the utter dissolution of the idolatrous and persecuting power of *Rome*. And the perpetuity and misery of her overthrow, never to revive any more, was represented by the emblem of horrible smoke from the unquenchable fire that consumed her, as incessantly ascending from her ruins to an endless eternity.

4 And the four and twenty elders, and the four beasts, fell down and worshipped God that sat on the throne, saying, Amen; Alleluia.

4 Then the four and twenty elders, and the four living creatures, the representatives of the church, and of gospel-ministers, (see the notes on *chap.* iv. 4, 6.) prostrated themselves with the profoundest reverence, and paid their adorations and praises to the great God, who appeared as seated on his imperial throne, saying, We heartily join with the general assembly, (*ver.* 1.) in their hymn of praise, for the judgments which thou hast executed upon this antichristian-power; and in testimony of our high approbation of, and concurrence with, all the ascriptions of honour to thee on that important occasion, we add our *Amen: Halellujah*, praised be the Lord!

5 And a voice came out of the throne, saying, Praise

5 Soon after this I heard a voice, which seemed to be uttered by a glorious angel, and to come forth immediately from before the throne of God in heaven,

NOTE.

* *Hallelujah* is a most lively and comprehensive expression of praise, often used, and translated, *Praise ye the Lord*, in the *Psalms*; the five last of which, with several others, begin and end, as this heavenly hymn doth, with that word: And several expositors have thought that this being originally a *Hebrew* word, retained in this song of praise, intimates that, upon the destruction of *Rome*, which may probably be by fire, (see the note on *chap.* xviii. 9.) the *Jews* shall be converted, who were prejudised against Christianity, all along before, by the idolatry and persecutions of the papacy; and that they are here called upon to join with the *Gentile* church, in praising the Lord for this wonderful and entire destruction of the Romish antichristian-power.

Praise our God, all ye his servants, and ye that fear him, both small and great.

ven, * saying to the church-militant on earth, Exalt, adore, and bless the name of our gracious God, who has faithfully performed his promises to you, O all ye his true worshippers, that love and serve him, and reverence and fear his holy Majesty, whether ye be of high or low degree, or whatever be your rank and attainments of a religious or civil nature.

6 And I heard as it were the voice of a great multitude, and as the voice of many waters, and as the voice of mighty thunderings, saying, Alleluia; for the Lord God omnipotent reigneth.

6 And, according to this divine command, methought, I instantly heard an innumerable company, even all *that feared the Lord, both small and great,* joining with the utmost alacrity in acclamations of joy and praise, on account of the glorious and happy state of the church on earth, consequent to the overthrow and punishment of all antichristian-powers; (*chap.* xx. 1,—6.) and the sound of their united voices was, for strength and loudness, like the noise of vast cataracts of water, or even the roaring of the sea, and the strongest claps of thunder, saying, *Hallelujah;* We exult and triumph, and call upon all others to praise the Lord: For now in a more eminent and glorious manner, than ever before, the Almighty Jehovah, the ever living and true God, † to whose empire the whole creation is subject, manifests his great power and glory in his ruling over all; and has set up his kingdom of grace in our world with the greatest majesty, light, and liberty, purity, peace, and extensive dominion, to the confusion of his enemies, and the joy of his saints.

7 Let

NOTES.

* *A voice came out from the throne,* is not here to be understood as the immediate voice of *God* himself: For he could not properly say, *Praise our God, all ye that fear him.* Nor do I apprehend it to have been the immediate voice of *Christ:* For though he, as man and Mediator, called his disciples his *brethren,* and sent a message to them, saying, (*John* xx. 17. see the paraphrase there) *I ascend to my Father and your Father, and to my God and your God;* yet he there expressed his own and their relation to God distinctly, in such a manner, as reserved the pre-eminence to himself. However, admitting that Christ, as the head of the church, might have called upon them, saying, without any impropriety, *Praise our God;* yet the person who uttered this voice seems to be the same that ordered the apostle *John* to write, *Blessed are they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb,* and that *refused the worship* which *John* offered to pay him, under some mistake; (*ver.* 9, 10.) whereas our blessed Lord never refused religious homage from any, (which was always his due as *God*) even while he was in his state of humiliation upon earth; much less can it be supposed that he would refuse it in his state of exaltation in heaven. I therefore take this voice to have been pronounced by a created angel, who was near the throne of God, and was probably either the angel by whom Christ signified the things contained in this prophecy to his servant *John;* (chap. i. 1.) or the angel who had *shewn unto him the judgment of the great whore.* (Chap xvii. 1)

† *The Lord God omnipotent reigns,* may be considered with relation to the *Father,* or to the *Son,* who is also *the mighty God,* (Isa. ix. 6.) and I think is styled *the Lord God Almighty,* Rev. xi. 17. (See the note there.) Accordingly, the kingdom here spoken of is *the kingdom of the Lord and of his Christ;* and is called *the kingdom of our God, and the power of his Christ,* chap. xi. 15. and xii. 10.

7 Let us be glad and rejoice, and give honour to him: for the marriage of the Lamb is come, and his wife hath made herself ready.

7 Let us now indulge a sacred pleasure and delight in him, and pay all honour, thanksgiving, and praise to him: For the happy time is now come publicly and visibly to solemnize the espousal of Christ to his church, (2 *Cor.* xi. 2.) whom he has redeemed to his Father, and purchased for himself, with his own precious blood, as *the Lamb that was slain;* (chap. v. 9, 12.) and she being joined in a marriage-covenant with him, who *rejoices over her, as a bridegroom over the bride,* * (Isa. lxii. 5.) is now chearfully waiting in a prepared state and frame to meet her bridegroom, and enter into his joy.

8 And to her was granted, that she should be arrayed in fine linen, clean and white: for the fine linen is the righteousness of saints.

8 And that she might be suitably adorned for his reception, it was graciously vouchsafed to her that, as grand bridegrooms use to make presents of rich attire to their brides of inferior character, that they may make a becoming appearance at the celebration of their nuptials; so she should be beautifully decked, at her husband's expence, with the most excellent ornaments; which may be compared to the finest linen that is spotless and bright, a lively emblem of honour, favour, and acceptance, and of purity, and holiness: For the fine linen signifies (δικαιωματα) the righteousness both of justification by faith in the righteousness of Christ to intitle her to heavenly bliss, and of sanctification by his Spirit to make her meet for enjoying it; both of which are put upon all the saints, like *garments of salvation*, the *robe of righteousness*, and the *wedding garment*. (Isa. lxi. 10. and Matth. xxii. 11, 12.)

9 And he saith unto me, Write, Blessed *are* they which are called unto the marriage-supper of the Lamb. And he saith unto me, These are the true sayings of God.

9 Then the angel, who had uttered the voice from the heavenly throne, (see the note on *ver.* 5.) applied himself directly to me, saying, In consideration of what you have now heard, write down, for the standing use of the church under all tribulations, that they, and they only, are substantially and securely blessed, and shall be so for ever, who are effectually called by divine grace, and admitted to all spiritual entertainments and delights, which may be figured out by the marriage-feast, that the Lamb of God has made for his bride. (*Luke* xiv. 15, 16.) And he, who talked with me, further said, This, and all other things revealed in your visions, are the infallible truths of God, and shall certainly have a punctual accomplishment in their season, according to his word. (*Chap.* xxi. 5. and xxii. 6.)

10 Upon

NOTE.

* Dr *More* and Mr. *Mede* suppose, that *the marriage of the Lamb*, and his *wife's being made ready*, refer to the conversion of the *Jews*, who, being formerly invited to *the marriage of the King's son*, refused to come; but now, being ready and prepared, made haste to come.

10 And I fell at his feet to worship him: and he said unto me, See *thou do it* not: I am thy fellow-servant. and of thy brethren that have the testimony of Jesus: worship God: for the testimony of Jesus is the spirit of prophecy.

10 Upon hearing these great and comfortable things from the angel, who appeared in such an illustrious and majestic form, as seemed like that of the Angel of the covenant, I, in a transport of admiration and joy, prostrated myself at his feet to pay him divine honours, as the Son of God: But he hastily stopped me short, and, correcting my mistake, said to me, in like manner as the apostles *Peter*, *Paul*, and *Barnabas* did to those that offered them religious worship, (*Acts* x. 25, 26. and xiv. 13,—15.) Take heed what ye do: * This sort of worship must not be paid to me, who, though a glorified spirit, am not a divine person, but only one of your fellow-servants and brethren in my present employment, who am commissioned by the Lord Jesus to make known to you the things that relate to his person, cause, and government, and to the revolutions he will make in the church and in the world, as you also are to communicate them to others. (*Chap.* i. 1, 2.) Let all your religious worship be reserved for, and paid only to God, to whom alone it is due; (*Matth.* iv. 10.) and by no means to me: For the testimony I have borne to Jesus, the Saviour, is dictated to me by the same Divine Spirit, who inspired the ancient prophets, and who by me now reveals to you the future events contained in your visions, that you may convey them to the church for their support and comfort: And therefore religious adoration is no more due from you to me, than from me to you; and so he rectified my mistake.

11 And I saw heaven opened, and behold,

11 In my next prophetic vision, methought, I saw heaven itself opened, from whence the Saviour came forth,

NOTE.

* The *worship* which *John* offered to this glorious angel, (see the note on *ver.* 5.) seems not to have been merely *civil respect*, but of a *religious* nature: For there was no reason why the angel should refuse to accept of *civil respect*; and his ordering the apostle to pay that very sort of worship to God, which he was about to offer him, (*chap.* xxii. 9.) was surely more than *civil honour*, which is infinitely beneath God's acceptance, and would be to put him upon a level with some exalted creature.——It may indeed seem strange, that the apostle *John* should, after this rebuke, so far forget himself, as to attempt such an idolatrous act a *second* time, as in *chap.* xxii. 8. But it is to be considered, that as *Peter*, in the mount of Transfiguration, was in such an ecstacy of awful wonder and joy, that *he knew not what to say*; (Mark ix. 6.) so the apostle *John* was in such a transport and surprise, as might not admit of calm and deliberate reflection, some time after the former rebuke, which was not quite so strong and decisive as that which followed; and this might precipitate him into the *second*, as it had into the *first* mistake. And if here was a neglect of due consideration, he might be suffered to fall into the same error again, to shew what imperfection attends the best of men in this world; and to give an opportunity for the more remarkably fixing the eternal rule of all religious worship at the close of the canon of the New Testament; as also for the more strongly condemning the worship of saints and angels, and guarding the people of God against it, which the Spirit of prophecy foresaw would notoriously prevail in the antichristian-church of *Rome*.

behold, a white horſe; and he that ſat upon him *was* called Faithful and True, and in righteouſneſs he doth judge and make war.

forth, with divine majeſty and glory, to eſpouſe the cauſe of his people in the moſt effectual manner againſt their antichriſtian-enemies; and, behold, a figurative repreſentation of a white horſe appeared to my view, ſuch as generals were wont to ride in ſolemn triumphs; which may be conſidered as an emblem of the everlaſting goſpel, that ſhould prevail more extenſively and ſucceſsfully, than ever before, with light and purity, ſpeed and power, in its laſt promulgation through the earth: And he, who appeared as riding proſperouſly upon it to guide and govern its courſe, was the Lord Chriſt, the Captain of ſalvation, who is, ever was, and will be, and may juſtly be called, and in this glorious diſpenſation will eminently appear to be, faithful and true to his Father, who appointed him, and to all thoſe that put their truſt in him; faithful in performing his promiſes to them, and true in executing his threatnings upon his and their adverſaries: And his procedure is with righteous judgment in taking the part of his church againſt his and their enemies, and in ſetting himſelf, as in battle-array, againſt all that oppoſe his cauſe and kingdom in the world.

12 His eyes *were* as a flame of fire, and on his head were many crowns: and he had a name written that no man knew but he himſelf:

12 The eyes of this auguſt perſon appeared to be as bright and penetrating, awful, terrible, and burning, as a flame of fire; (*chap.* i. 14.) and on his head was a repreſentation of many crowns, ſet, as it were, one upon another, the ſymbols of his natural and mediatorial authority, and univerſal dominion over the church and the world, in all ſpiritual and temporal concerns, and of his ſubduing all nations and things to himſelf: And he bore an adorable name, which, as expreſſive of his divine nature and perfections, and of his dignity and authority, as *the Word made fleſh*, (John. i. 1, 14.) was ſo wonderful, (*If.* ix. 6.) that, like the name *Jehovah*, no mere creature knew any thing of it, till it was revealed; and even then it was ſo incomprehenſible by any of them, that none but himſelf, to the excluſion of all creatures, could fully underſtand the deep myſteries contained in it. (See *Matth.* xi. 27.)

13 And he *was* clothed with a veſture dipped in blood: and his name is called, The Word of God.

13 He was further repreſented to me, like a mighty and victorious general, as wearing a garment all over ſtained with the blood of his vanquiſhed and ſlaughtered enemies, over whom he was to gain a complete conqueſt in his ſtate of exaltation, as the reward of his obedience and ſufferings unto death, when his raiment was dyed with his own blood in his ſtate of humiliation: And one of the glorious names that properly belongs to him, and he is known by in the church, according to divine revelation, (*chap.* i. 2,

9. and *John* i. 1, 14.) is the eternally eſſential and perſonal, who in due time became the declarative and executive *Word of God.*

14 And the armies which were in heaven followed him upon white horſes, clothed in fine linen, white and clean.

14 And his armies, conſiſting not merely of the heavenly hoſt of angels, who as miniſtring ſpirits attend him, but chiefly, if not wholly, of his miniſtring ſervants and faithful people, who are born from above, have their citizenſhip in heaven, and are joined in communion with *the general aſſembly and church of the firſt-born, whoſe names are written in heaven:* Theſe, like a numerous and well-diſciplined army of *the called, choſen, and faithful,* (chap. xvii. 14.) who had liſted as volunteers under his banner, and were headed and animated by him, appeared as marching after their glorious Leader with exceeding pomp and ſplendor, to make up his magnificent train, as mounted, like himſelf, upon white horſes, the emblem of goſpel-truth and purity, joy and victory; and they ſeemed to be richly arrayed with fine linen, bright and pure, an emblem of *the robe of righteouſneſs,* and *garment of ſalvation,* which, as has been ſaid, (*ver.* 8.) ſignify *the righteouſneſs of the ſaints.* The meaning of all which may be conſidered as pointing to ſuch a ſtate of peace and triumph, and of dignity and honour, like kings and prieſts unto God, that the church of Chriſt on earth ſhould now be advanced to, as bears a near reſemblance of what is enjoyed in heaven.

15 And out of his mouth goeth a ſharp ſword, that with it he ſhould ſmite the nations: and he ſhall rule them with a rod of iron: and he treadeth the wine-preſs of the fierceneſs and wrath of Almighty God.

15 And to aſſure me that the Captain of ſalvation would obtain his victories, not by any power of his followers, as of themſelves, but entirely by his own power, as exerted either immediately, or mediately by them, I ſaw the appearance of a ſharp ſword proceeding out of his mouth, an emblem of his dreadful threatnings, and of his having the power of the ſword, which he would uſe according to his word, in taking righteous vengeance on the idolatrous, perſecuting, and ſinful nations, and would rule over them by his authority and power, as *with an iron ſceptre,* and *daſh them in pieces like a potter's veſſel:* (Pſ. ii. 9.) And as, their iniquity being full, they were thoroughly fitted for deſtruction, like cluſters of grapes fully ripe to be trodden and ſqueezed in a wine-preſs; ſo he would *tread them in his anger, and trample them in his fury,* (Iſa. lxiii. 3.) and thereby cruſh them to death by terrible impreſſions of the heavieſt wrath, which is no leſs than *that* of God Almighty, whoſe power is infinite and irreſiſtible; and none *can ſtand before his indignation, or abide in the fierceneſs of his anger.* (Nah. i. 6.)

16 And he hath on his veſture, and on his thigh a name written, KING OF KINGS, AND LORD OF LORDS.

16 And this victorious avenger of his church upon his and their enemies was further repreſented, as having an inſcription of another of his diſtinguiſhing titles, like a *motto* wrote upon his upper raiment, and particularly on that part of it which covered his thigh, the place where the ſword uſually hangs in order to its being drawn, (*Pſ.* xlv. 3.) and where it might be viſible to all around him, importing, that he is, and by his mighty acts ſoon would effectually prove himſelf to be, by way of eminence, the ſovereign Lord and Ruler of all the potentates, princes, and nobles of the earth, (far beyond what the vain-glorious monarchs of the *Eaſt* could claim) to govern, influence or reſtrain, ſave or deſtroy them; and to do his will, and work by and upon them, as ſeems beſt in his ſight.

17 And I ſaw an angel ſtanding in the ſun; and he cried with a loud voice, ſaying to all the fowls that fly in the midſt of heaven, Come and gather yourſelves together unto the ſupper of the great God;

17 And, the more deeply to impreſs me with a ſenſe of the dreadful, extenſive, and complete devaſtation he would make upon all his antichriſtian-enemies, I beheld an angel as illuſtrious and conſpicuous to the whole world, as if he ſtood in the midſt of the ſun to be ſeen of all: And, with a voice ſtrong and loud enough to be heard far and wide, he ſummoned all the ravenous birds that fly in the region of the air, ſaying, in alluſion to a day of general ſlaughter, in which the dead bodies of the ſlain are expoſed to be devoured by thoſe voracious animals, Come, and gather yourſelves together, to eat the carcaſes of thoſe that fall in battle; which the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, (ver. 16.) who is *the great God*, (Tit. ii. 13.) has prepared for you to feaſt upon, as in a field all over covered with the dead bodies of vanquiſhed and ſlaughtered armies; which may be conſidered as Chriſt's call to his people on earth, by a commiſſioned angel, to rejoice and triumph over them, like his gueſts, invited to feaſt on the ſacrifice, which he would make to his wrath and juſtice, for their actual deliverance from the power of thoſe that hated and oppreſſed them.

18 That ye may eat the fleſh of kings, and the fleſh of captains, and the fleſh of mighty men, and the fleſh of horſes, and of them that ſit on them, and the fleſh of all men, both free and bond, both ſmall and great.

18 Come ye all hither, that, to allude to an ancient prophecy, (*Ezek.* xxxix. 17,—21.) ye may regale yourſelves, and feed to the full on the carcaſes of the wicked kings of the earth, and particularly of the *Roman* popiſh empire; and of the commanders of armies, and of men of mighty valour; and may feaſt upon the fleſh of war-horſes and their riders; and upon the fleſh of all ranks and orders of men, which had taken the part, and joined in the cauſe of antichriſt, whether they be maſters, or ſervants and ſlaves, high or low, who ſhall univerſally fall a prey to you, like dead bodies on the field of battle; which may be

be conſidered as a ſtrong figurative repreſentation of the ſaints rejoicing to divide the ſpoil, which will fall to them by the total and ignominious deſtruction of all their enemies, as a juſt retaliation for their having ſlain Chriſt's witneſſes, and not ſuffered their dead bodies to be put in graves, but rejoiced over them in their calamitous circumſtances. (*Chap.* xi. 7,—10.)

19 And I ſaw the beaſt, and the kings of the earth, and their armies gathered together, to make war againſt him that ſat on the horſe, and againſt his army.

19 Then, after this ſummons to feaſt upon the ſlain, methought, I ſaw the antichriſtian-beaſt, which repreſented *Rome*-papal, as a perſecuting power, in conjunction with the princes and potentates of the earth that ſupported it; and the whole *poſſe* of forces, conſiſting of all the wicked and ungodly, whether *Papiſts*, *Mahometans*, or *Pagans*, even all that they could muſter, aſſembled together to engage in a vigorous and warlike oppoſition againſt the *King of kings, and Lord of lords*, (who appeared as ſitting on *a white horſe*, ver. 11, 16.) to ſubvert his goſpel and kingdom; and againſt his army of faithful ſervants to deſtroy them that followed him, as their Captain and Leader.

20 And the beaſt was taken, and with him the falſe prophet that wrought miracles before him, with which he deceived them that had received the mark of the beaſt, and them that worſhipped his image. Theſe both were caſt alive into a lake of fire burning with brimſtone.

20 And the iſſue of this battle was, that the antichriſtian perſecuting power, which under one figurative view has been repreſented as *the beaſt*, and under another, as *the falſe prophet*, (chap. xvi. 13.) who pretended to work miracles in the ſight, and under the protection of the beaſt, and by his lying wonders impoſed upon, and deluded the nations that had openly profeſſed ſubjection to the beaſt, and, in token of it, wore its mark, (ſee the note on *chap.* xiii. 16.) and paid idolatrous worſhip to him, and to the images which he had ſet up as objects of religious adoration. Both theſe idolatrous and perſecuting powers, which may be differently conceived of in their *civil* and *eccleſiaſtical* capacities, (*chap.* xvi. 13.) fell as captives into the conqueror's hands: And as the chiefs of rebellious armies, when ſubdued and taken priſoners, uſe to be moſt exemplarily puniſhed; ſo theſe who were the ring-leaders in the general apoſtacy and ſevere perſecutions, and in this war againſt Chriſt, and his people and cauſe, were grievouſly tormented, like perſons caſt alive into an abyſs of fire, burning, like *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, with an intenſe and everlaſting flame, as though mingled with brimſtone, to feed and maintain it with the fierceſt rage, that it never might be quenched. (*Mark* ix. 43,—48.)

21 And the remnant were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat upon the horſe, which *ſword* proceeded out

21 And the reſt of the armies, who, like common ſoldiers, fought againſt Chriſt and his church, under the command and influence of theſe wicked leaders, were entirely vanquiſhed and expoſed to ſhame, like enemies ſlain and left unburied in a field of battle, by the glo-

rious

out of his mouth; and all the fowls were filled with their flesh.

rious conqueror who sat upon the white horse, (*ver.* 11.) even by the sharp sword, which was represented as proceeding out of his mouth, (*ver.* 15.) to intimate their being *destroyed by the spirit of his mouth, and the brightness of his coming:* (2 Thess. ii. 8, *&c.*) And, according to the summons given before, (*ver.* 17, 18.) all the birds of prey fed upon their slain carcases, and were fully satiated with their flesh; which may signify the satisfaction that the church of Christ will have in the utter destruction of the whole power of his and their enemies, as the glory of God will be thereby manifested, and a way opened for the happiest and most glorious state of Christ's kingdom on earth, then at hand to take place.

RECOLLECTIONS.

O with what rapturous hallelujahs will the church-militant on earth join the chorus of the church-triumphant in heaven, when righteous judgment shall be executed upon all the powers of popery, and their confederate kings and nations through the world, and when the public marriage of the Lamb shall come! They will then ascribe salvation, glory, honour, and power, with joyful triumph to the Father and Son, either of which may be considered in their song of praise, as the Lord their God, even the Lord God Omnipotent, whose kingdom rules over all, as will then be uncontroulably evident; and who, in distinction from angels and all mere creatures, is the only object of religious adoration. O happy souls, that shall be called to the marriage-supper of the Lamb, and be presented to him in robes of illustrious and spotless righteousness, as a bride richly adorned, and fully prepared for her husband! How glorious will our Lord Jesus appear, when he shall come forth, as riding on a white horse, the symbol of victory, joy, and triumph, to espouse the cause of his people, and take vengeance on the combined armies of his enemies that rose up in a rebellious war against him; and when all his true followers, as beautifully mounted and arrayed, shall march after him, as his pompous train, and sharers in the happy fruits of his conquests, which they also obtain through him! He will then be known to be the essential and declarative Word of God, the King of kings, and Lord of lords; titles so divinely great, as can belong to none but God.—Faithfulness, truth, and righteousness run through all his dispensations; his penetrating wisdom and universal dominion, his just indignation, and awful government and executions will then be eminently manifested, as signified by flames of fire darting from his eyes, by many crowns on his head, by a sharp sword proceeding out of his mouth, by his raiment sprinkled with the blood of his adversaries, and by his ruling them with a rod of iron, and treading them, as ripe for destruction, in the wine-press of the fierce wrath of God Almighty.—Ah! dismal havoc, that will then be made upon all the enemies of truth and righteousness, of what rank or degree soever, like carcases slain, and left unburied on a field of battle! The beast and the false prophet, all the tyrannical and idolatrous powers of the Papacy, shall be exemplarily punished, like the chief leaders of a rebellion, that are thrown alive, into a sulphurous lake of unquenchable fire; and their whole army shall miserably perish. Then all the saints shall be summoned to seize the spoils of war, to their full satisfaction, like the fowls of the air that feast upon the dead bodies of men, as their prey. Bless the Lord, O all ye servants that fear him, small and great; for all these are the true sayings of God, testified by the Spirit of prophecy to an angel, and to an apostle, who are only fellow-servants and brethren in ministring them to us, for our support and comfort under all present tribulations, which shall certainly end in a glorious state of peace, purity, and all prosperity to the church. *Hallelujah!*

CHAP.

CHAP. XX.

An angel descends from heaven, who binds and shuts up Satan in the bottomless pit for a thousand years, during which the church reigns with Christ in a glorious state on earth, 1,—6. *Satan is loosed again for a little while to deceive the nations once more, and, gathering all his forces together, makes his last effort against Christ and his church, which issues in their own final and irretrievable overthrow, and in the eternal torment of the devil, together with the beast and the false prophet,* 7,—10. *Hereupon the general judgment of the great day is described, in which all the dead are gathered before Christ on his throne, the books are opened, and they are judged; and all, that are not found written in the book of life, are cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, to be tormented for ever,* 11,—15.

PERIOD IV.

TEXT.

AND I saw an angel come down from heaven, having the key of the bottomless pit, and a great chain in his hand.

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the foregoing visions of the destruction of the papal power and all its adherents, at the end of twelve hundred and sixty years reign of the beast, methought, I saw a glorious angel descend, as with a commission from the throne of God in heaven, and as bearing two emblems of divine authority, which carried an intimation of his being the Lord Jesus Christ himself, the Angel of God's presence, who had been represented, as *having the keys of hell and death*, and the *key of* David *to shut and open* without controul, and as *casting out the great dragon;* (chap. i. 18. and iii. 7. and xii. 7,—9.) and who came to *destroy the devil*, as well as *his works*. (Heb. ii. 14. and 1 John iii. 8.) Accordingly the emblems, with which he now appeared, were the key of hell, that horrible abyss (ἄβυσσος) of darkness, misery, and despair, in one hand, and a large strong chain, for binding criminals, in the other; to signify his irresistible power to open the gate of that bottomless pit, and then shut and lock it fast upon those that are cast into it; and to bind up all the force of the devil and his accomplices at pleasure.

2 And he laid hold on the dragon, that old serpent, which is the devil and Satan, and bound him a thousand years,

2 Then, to execute his commission, he, as seemed to me, arrested and seized upon the great dragon, who had been described in a former vision, (*chap.* xii. 9.) as the *old serpent*, whose names by which he is most commonly known, are *the devil* and *Satan;* the first of which signifies a *slanderer* or false accuser; and the second an *adversary*, as this wicked spirit most emphatically is, both of God and his people: And the

the Angel of his preſence reſtrained this evil one from doing any miſchief, either by ſeduction or violence, for a very long ſpace of time *, which may be called a thouſand years, whether meant preciſely of juſt ſo many, or indefinitely for a great number of years.

3 And caſt him into the bottomleſs pit, and ſhut him up, and ſet a ſeal upon him, that he ſhould deceive the nations no more, till the thouſand years ſhould be fulfilled: and after that, he muſt be looſed a little ſeaſon.

3 And the angel threw him down into the great unfathomable deep of confinement and horror, (*Mat.* viii. 29. and *Luke* viii. 31.) and ſhut him up as a cloſe priſoner in hell, as in a dark and diſmal dungeon; and kept him in ſafe cuſtody there, the emblem of which was ſetting a ſeal over him, in alluſion to the cuſtom of ſecuring doors by a ſeal, like what was ſet on the ſtones that were laid at the mouth of the lions' den, and of Chriſt's ſepulchre; (*Dan.* vi. 17. and *Matth.* xxvii. 66. ſee the note there.) And all this was done to the end that the great adverſary, the devil, might no longer, as in times paſt, go *about like a roaring lion ſeeking whom he may devour*, (1 Pet. v. 8.) nor might delude and miſlead the nations of the earth, as formerly, into iniquity, error, and perſecution, till thoſe thouſand years (τα χιλια ετη) ſhould be expired; and after *that*, (ver. 1, 8.) according to divine appointment and permiſſion, his reſtraint muſt be taken off for a very ſhort ſpace of time, compared with his former dominion, and with the thouſand years of his confinement; the iſſue of all which will be to his greater confuſion, and the Saviour's greater glory.

4 And I ſaw thrones, and they ſat upon them, and judgment was given unto them: and *I ſaw* the ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus, and for the word of God, and which had not worſhipped

4 Upon the forementioned deliverance of the church of Chriſt from all diſturbance by the efforts of Satan, I ſaw an appearance of glorious thrones, and of perſons ſeated with honour and dignity upon them, to whom the authority of ruling over their enemies, and exerciſing eccleſiaſtical and civil juriſdiction was committed, and for whom righteous judgment had, at length, been given againſt all thoſe that had unjuſtly reproached, perſecuted, and oppreſſed them: And I beheld a repreſentation of the ſouls † of thoſe, who, as

NOTES.

* The term *thouſand* is often uſed in prophetic ſtyle in an indefinite ſenſe, for a large and perfect number, as in *Deut.* i. 11. and vii. 9. and xxxii. 30. *Pſal.* xc. 4. and xci. 7. and cv. 8. *Eccleſ.* vi. 6. *Iſa.* xxx. 17. and lx. 22. and 2 *Pet.* iii. 8. with ſeveral other places; and it is left to the reader's judgment to take it either in the *indefinite*, or the ſtrictly *literal* ſenſe. But ſome have imagined (I think without ſufficient ground) that the 1000 years are to be reſolved into days, and that each day is to be taken for a year, which would make the duration of this period about 365,000 years.

† *The ſouls of them that were beheaded for the witneſs of Jeſus* may be conſidered as meant, not of the *individual perſons* that ſuffered martyrdom for his ſake, but of their *ſucceſſors in the ſame ſpirit*, who being of the ſame temper for faith, patience, zeal, and fortitude, and profeſſing the ſame doctrines with the martyrs, were one body with them;

ped the beast, neither his image, neither

as one society, with their predecessors, may be said to have suffered martyrdom by being beheaded, or put to

NOTE.

them; and so in the style of prophecy might be spoken of, as though they were the same persons, in like manner as *John the Baptist* is called *Elias*, because he came *in the spirit and power of* Elias, (*Matth.* xi. 14. and xvii. 12. compared with *Luke* i. 17.) and as *Rome*-antichristian is in several places of this prophecy called *Sodom*, *Egypt*, and *Babylon*, on account of its being like them in idolatry, pride, luxury, and cruelty; and the *two witnesses*, that were to prophecy in sackcloth 1260 days of years, (*chap.* xi. 3.) could not mean the same individual persons, but a succession of them that persisted in the same faith and profession: (see also the note on 2 *Thess.* ii. 3.) When therefore it is said, *The souls of them that were beheaded for the witness of Jesus lived and reigned with Christ a thousand years*, this may be taken, according to prophetic style, in a metaphorical sense, and may signify a succession of such, in like manner as the *two witnesses* being *killed*, and their *dead bodies rising and standing on their feet*, is to be understood *chap.* xi. 7, 11.; and as the restoration of *Israel* from their captivity is called their *living and standing on their feet*, and God's *opening their graves, and causing them to come out of their graves;* (Ezek. xxxvii. 9, 10, 12.) and as the conversion of the *Jews* in the last days is spoken of, as *life from the dead.* (Rom. xi. 15.) Accordingly the saints *living and reigning with Christ*, may relate to their abundance of spirituality, purity and glory, light, love and joy, tranquillity and safety, and to the power of civil magistracy, as being in their hands, and exercised with great authority and success, for suppressing all iniquity and profaneness, and promoting true religion and holiness in those happy days.—I am not insensible that many learned and pious men have put a *literal* construction on this prophecy, to denote a proper resurrection of the dead bodies of former martyrs, and (as some of them think) of all other departed saints; and they accordingly suppose that their dead bodies shall be raised to life, and reign in a glorious manner with Christ, as *personally* and *visibly* sitting on his throne, for a thousand years upon earth. But as I can scarce think that the corporal presence of Christ will be removed for a thousand years from heaven to this earth; so a literal resurrection of all the bodies of the saints is spoken of, as *in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye, at the last trump*, in order to their meeting the Lord in the air, and being with him, not on earth, but *for ever* in heaven. (1 *Cor.* xv. 52. and 1 *Thess.* iv. 16, 17.) And after the expiration of this thousand years, and after Satan shall be loosed again for a little while at the end of them, we have an account of the general resurrection of all persons, without any exception, or the least hint that the martyrs, or any other saints, had rose so long a time before, *ver.* 12, 13. of this chapter. (See the notes there.) And as a proper resurrection is never expressed in Scripture by the reviving or living again of *the soul*, but only of *the body*; so it seems extremely forced to understand the *living again of the immortal souls* of them that were beheaded, as descriptive of a *literal resurrection;* and a resurrection of the bodies of *glorified* saints to live on earth for a thousand years, seems inconsistent with the sublimer felicity and honour that their souls were possessed of before in heaven, and with their being liable to be deceived, in case Satan had not been restrained, as also with the trouble that must necessarily arise to them from the vigorous opposition which he and his army would make against them at the expiration of the thousand years, in which he was bound. It must likewise be an exceeeding debasement of their refined dignity and delight in the immediate presence of Christ on his heavenly throne, to exchange them for any pleasures or honours upon the earth, especially if (as some *Millenaries* imagine) they are to be entertained with any sensitive enjoyments. (See Dr. *Whitby* on the *Millenium*, and Mr. *Durham*'s lectures, introductory to his exposition of this chapter.) I therefore rather incline to think that, according to the style of prophecy, and particularly in this book, which *is figurative*, all this relates, not *literally* to the resurrection of the martyrs or other saints, and the *personal* reign of Christ for a thousand years on earth; but *figuratively*, and in a spiritual sense, for glorious days of long continuance to the church on earth, whether for the precise number of a thousand years, or not. (See the note on *ver.* 2.)

ther had received his mark upon their foreheads, or in their hands; and and they lived and reigned with Chriſt a thouſand years.

to other cruel deaths for the ſake of their faithful teſtimony to Chriſt, as the only Saviour, and to the written word of God, as the only rule of faith, worſhip, and obedience; and who had maintained their integrity with the ſpirit, faith, and patience of martyrs, without ſubmitting, through fear of tortures or death, to the authority of the Pope, or paying religious homage to him, or to any idols of his ſetting up; and had neither promoted nor owned the power of the antichriſtian beaſt, as though they had been diſtinguiſhed by bearing his badge upon their foreheads, or their hands. (See the note on *chap.* xiii. 16.) And theſe, together with their ſucceſſors of the ſame ſpirit, lived as a ſpiritual and political body in a much happier ſtate than ever before; and, the *Jews* being converted, and the fulneſs of the *Gentiles* brought in, they, who before had *ſuffered with Chriſt*, (Rom. viii. 17. and 2 Tim. xi. 12.) now reigned with him on earth, under him, and by virtue of his powerful influence, and of their relation to him, in a glorious ſtate of reſt, love and peace, of light, liberty and holineſs, of victory and dominion over their enemies, and of all manner of proſperity and ſafety, during the forementioned thouſand years, in which Satan was bound, and ſhut up in priſon, that neither he, nor his inſtruments might deceive or annoy them.

5 But the reſt of the dead lived not again until the thouſand years were finiſhed. This *is* the firſt reſurrection.

5 But as to the reſt who, in contradiſtinction to theſe, had *worſhipped the beaſt*, &c. and were *the remnant that were ſlain with the ſword of him that ſat on the horſe;* (chap. xix. 21.) * they were ſo entirely ſubdued, that they loſt all their power and authority, and had no ſucceſſors of the ſame wicked and active ſpirit and temper to ſurvive them, till the thouſand years of the ſaints living and reigning with Chriſt were expired; and ſo, during this glorious period, the antichriſtian perſecuting party will be reduced to a political death, as the witneſſes propheſying in ſackcloth had been before: And then the church of Chriſt will be ſo exceedingly happy and proſperous in all its temporal and ſpiritual concerns, as may juſtly be eſteemed, in a metaphorical ſenſe, a reſurrection from the

NOTE.

* "There is mention, (ſays Mr. *Lowman*) in this prophecy, of two ſorts of dead perſons; thoſe who were ſlain for the *witneſs of Jeſus*, and thoſe that were ſlain by *the ſword of him that ſat on the horſe*. As here is an account of the death of faithful Chriſtians by their perſecutors, and of their perſecutors themſelves by Chriſt, theſe perſecutors are called the *remnant*, the *reſt*, (οι λοιπoι).——Thus the dead church raiſed to life, and living and reigning for a thouſand years, and the enemies of the church remaining dead, and not living again till the thouſand years were finiſhed, will exactly agree in the ſame figurative meaning, &c." (See the whole of his note.)

the dead, as the reſtoration of *Iſrael* from their captivity, and the general converſion of the *Jews* are deſcribed. (*Ezek.* xxxvii. 10, 12. and *Rom.* xi. 15.) This glorious ſtate of the church in the *Millenium* may well be called *the firſt reſurrection*, as it will precede, and may be conſidered as a *figure* of the reſurrection of the body afterwards unto eternal life.

6 Bleſſed and holy *is* he that hath part in the firſt reſurrection: on ſuch the ſecond death hath no power, but they ſhall be prieſts of God, and of Chriſt, and ſhall reign with him a thouſand years.

6 That man is richly bleſſed of God, and effectually ſanctified by his Spirit, that ſhall ſhare in all the honours and delights of this *firſt reſurrection* to a ſtate of freedom from his former troubles and temptations, and of as complete happineſs and conformity to the holy image of Chriſt, as can be enjoyed on earth, and *that*, as a certain pledge, earneſt, and lively foretaſte of all perfection in heaven. Though ſuch as theſe may die corporally as well as the wicked, they ſhall not, like them, die eternally, or feel any of their miſeries *in the lake that burns with fire and brimſtone;* (chap. xxi. 8.) which may be called *the ſecond death*, as it comes after the death of the body: But they, in a ſucceſſion of them, ſhall be viſibly conſecrated to God the Father, and to his Son Jeſus Chriſt, as a kingdom of prieſts, entirely devoted to their ſervice in the beauties of holineſs, with freedom and delight; and, as has been ſaid, (*ver.* 4.) they ſhall be advanced to all civil and religious dignity and authority with Chriſt, in a due ſubordination to him, their Lord and King, through the whole duration of the thouſand years of that moſt happy ſtate of the church on earth.

PERIOD V.

7 And when the thouſand years are expired, Satan ſhall be looſed out of his priſon,

7 And at the expiration of the thouſand years, in which the ſaints ſhall triumph with glory, and meet with no diſturbance from any of their enemies, their grand adverſary, the devil, ſhall be again ſuffered to go forth for a little ſeaſon, as out of his priſon, in which he had been ſhut up; (*ver.* 3.) and ſhall try his laſt and utmoſt effort againſt them; their happy ſtate on earth not being perpetually to abide, as that of the heavenly ſtate will.

8 And ſhall go out to deceive the nations, which are in the four quarters of the earth, Gog, and Magog, to gather them together to battle: the number of whom *is* as the ſand of the ſea.

8 And Satan being releaſed, by divine permiſſion, from the total reſtraint that Chriſt had laid upon him for a thouſand years, will then purſue his own malicious temper and deſigns, as he had done before, againſt Chriſt and his church, by endeavouring, once more, to delude and draw after him people of various nations, whether conſiſting of ſuch formal profeſſors, as externally fell in with the church, and durſt not do otherwiſe, in the years of its flouriſhing ſtate, but were at heart diſaffected to the purity of the goſpel

and the power of godliness; or consisting of such, as through enmity or fear, flew to as distant countries as they could; even all secret and open enemies to real religion, where-ever they were spread abroad, toward the East, West, North, and South, through the earth: These, for their great multitude, and for their wicked, envious, ambitious, and oppressive temper, and the utter destruction which they at last will be brought to, * may *figuratively* be styled *Gog* and *Magog*, who, as *Egypt* and *Babylon* had been before, were the last powerful and inveterate adversaries to *Israel*, according to the prophetic account of them. (*Ezek.* chaps. xxxviii. and xxxix.) All these will Satan practise upon, by his artful insinuations, to assemble themselves together into one grand army, and unite their forces, by all ways and means possible, against the church, to mar its prosperity, and regain his lost power over it; and they were such a prodigious multitude, as, like the sand of the sea-shore, is innumerable.

9 And they went upon the breadth of the earth, and compassed the camp of the saints about, and the beloved city: and fire came down from God out of heaven, and devoured them.

9 And I saw in my vision, that this huge host, with Satan at their head, as their captain-general, spread themselves over the face of the earth, and particularly over the breadth of *Immanuel*'s land: (*Isa.* viii. 8.) And, to allude to the encampments of *Israel* about the tabernacle in the wilderness, (*Numb.* ii. 2, *&c.*) they surrounded the tents of God's peculiar and holy people, in the midst of which his tabernacle was set, that they might harrass and distress them: And, to allude to *Israel*'s settlement afterwards at *Jerusalem*, these bold enemies encompassed the church, which, like a city, was compacted together in beautiful order, and which God had loved, and chosen and delighted to dwell in, that they might besiege and destroy it by their united attacks upon it: And while they were engaged in this daring attempt, the fire of God's wrath, like what he threatned to *Gog* and *Magog*, (Ezek. xxxviii. 22. and xxxix. 6.) came down from heaven, and utterly consumed them in the general conflagration of the last day, and in the eternal fire

NOTE.

* All the guesses I have met with about the signification of *Gog* and *Magog*, in an application of it to any *particular* nation, people, or party, upon earth, or to the wicked that were politically dead, and supposed to be now raised again, appear to me so very unsatisfying, fanciful, and unlikely, that I have contented myself with such a general account, as, according to the style of prophecy, so familiarly used in this book, may answer to the character of *Gog* and *Magog*: For as, in this book of prophecy, the anti-christian powers were styled *Egypt* and *Babylon*, (chap. xi. 8. and 16, 19. and xvii. 5.) because they were ancient oppressive enemies to *Israel*; so the last enemies to the true church, after the thousand years of its prosperity, before the second coming of Christ, may be styled *Gog* and *Magog*, because they were the last powerful enemies to *Israel*, after their deliverance from captivity, before his first coming, as appears from the 36th, 37th, 38th, and 39th chapters of *Ezekiel*.

fire that follows it; an emblem of which had been given in the overthrow of *Sodom* and *Gomorrah*, as God rained fire and brimstone from heaven to destroy those wicked cities. (*Jude*, ver. 7.)

10 And the devil, that deceived them, was cast into the lake of fire and brimstone, where the beast and the false prophet *are*, and shall be tormented day and night, for ever and ever.

10 And the devil himself, that grand deceiver, who had influenced his subjects to combine together, and set themselves in battle-array against the church, and had headed them in their opposition to it, was thrown down from all his dominion, and plunged into a deep and large pit, which burned with the most dreadful torture, as with unquenchable fire and brimstone; where the persecuting and idolatrous papal powers, that had been represented under the figures of the beast and the false prophet, were already suffering the due reward of their abominable and complicated iniquities: (*chap.* xix. 20.) And the judgment of the great day being then at hand, to which Satan was *reserved in everlasting chains of darkness*, (Jude, *ver.* 6.) he shall be, not barely restrained, as he was before, for a thousand years; (*ver.* 2, 3.) but shall be exquisitely tormented, together with those his chief instruments, incessantly, without relaxation or end, in the *everlasting fire prepared for the devil and his angels*; (Matth. xxv. 41.) which may be called *a lake of fire and brimstone*, in allusion to the sulphureous lake, where *Sodom* and *Gomorrah* stood, when the Lord *rained fire and brimstone upon them* to destroy them. (*Gen.* xix. 24, 25.)

PERIOD VI.

11 And I saw a great white throne, and him that sat on it, from whose face the earth and the heaven fled away, and there was found no place for them.

11 And for the execution of divine wrath upon these ringleaders in wickedness, and upon all that lived and died under their dominion, I further beheld a magnificent throne of judgment, awfully glorious, and shining with illustrious light, and spotless purity, free from all injustice; and saw the Lord Jesus, as Judge of the whole world, seated upon it, whose appearance was so august, powerful, and tremendous, that all nature seemed to fly before him; and the former state of the earth, and of the elementary heaven *passed away; which, being set on fire, were dissolved and melted with fervent heat*, in order to the introduction of *the new heavens and new earth, wherein dwells righteousness*: (2 Pet. iii. 10,—13.) The present frame of things so entirely vanished, that there was no remainder of them.

12 And I saw the dead, small and great,

12 And I saw, in this vision, all the dead, both righteous and wicked *, which were now raised from their

NOTE.

* This description of *the final judgment* exactly corresponds to our Lord's own

great, ſtand before God; and the books were opened: and another book was opened, which is *the book* of life: and the dead were judged out of thoſe things which were written in the books, according to their works.

their graves, whether they are high or low, rich or poor, magiſtrates or peaſants, older or younger perſons, ſtanding in the immediate preſence of Chriſt, to be judged by him, who is God, as well as man, to whom *all judgment is committed;* (John v. 22.) and, to allude to the moſt accurate modes of proceſs in human courts of judicature, methought, I ſaw the book of divine omniſcience, in which are critically regiſtered all the thoughts, words, and deeds, of every one; and the book of conſcience, which tallies to it; and the books of the law of nature, and of the revealed law and goſpel, the only rules of judgment, (*Rom.* ii. 12,—16.) all opened, in order to this innumerable multitude's being brought to their public and ſolemn trial: And another book of eternal decrees of love and grace was opened, which contained the names of all that were enrolled in heaven for eternal life, as thoſe whom the Father had given to the Son to be redeemed, ſanctified, and ſaved by him, on which account it may be ſtyled *the Lamb's book of life.* (Chap. xiii. 8. and xxi. 27.) And all the dead, being raiſed again, were tried, together with thoſe then alive on earth, (1 *Cor.* xv. 51, 52. and 1 *Theſſ.* iv. 15, —17.) and had a deciſive and final ſentence paſſed upon them, anſwerable to the things that were recorded in thoſe books reſpectively, according to the evidence of, and in proportion to, their ſeveral works, whether good or bad, as they teſtified in judgment for, or againſt their being real Chriſtians.

13 And the ſea gave up the dead which were in it; and death and hell delivered up the dead which were in them; and they were judged every man

13 And this final judgment was ſo abſolutely univerſal, that not only they, that had been buried in the earth, roſe out of their graves; but they alſo, that had been ſunk and covered in the waters of the great deep, were raiſed by the omnipotent command of him who ſat upon the throne; (*ver.* 11.) ſo that neither the earth, nor the ſea, nor any repoſitory whatſoever, could retain their bodies under the power

NOTE.

own repreſentation of the *univerſal judgment*, (chap. xxii. 12.) *when he ſhall ſit on the throne of his glory, and all nations ſhall be gathered before him*, at the ſame time, for judgment to paſs on the righteous and the wicked, according to the proof that ſhall then be given of their different characters; (*Matth.* xxv. 31,—46.) and, ſpeaking of that ſolemn day, he ſaid, *Then he ſhall reward every man according to his works.* (Mat. xvi. 27.) The apoſtle *Paul* alſo ſays, that *God will render to every man according to his deeds*; (Rom. ii. 6. ſee the note there) and that *we muſt all appear before the judgment-ſeat of Chriſt, that every one may receive the things done in his body according to that he has done, whether it be good or bad:* (2 Cor. v. 10. ſee alſo 2 Theſſ. i. 7,—10.) It therefore is moſt natural to conſider *the dead's ſtanding before God*, and *their being judged according to their works*, as meant, not barely of the judgment of the *wicked*, but of the univerſal judgment of *all mankind*; nor is it otherwiſe eaſy to conceive why *the book of life*, which the wicked have no ſhare in, is here ſo particularly mentioned in the proceſs of this judgment.

man according to their works.

er of death, but were forced to reſign them *. And the ſouls of them that exiſted in a ſeparate ſtate, by means of death, were ſummoned to appear, together with their bodies, before the great Judge of all; and could be no longer held in their ſtate of ſeparation, which reſigned them. And all theſe were impartially tried, and received ſentence according to the kind, and in proportion to the degree of their reſpective works, whether good or evil, as witneſſing for or againſt them.

14 And death and hell were caſt into the lake of fire. This is the ſecond death.

14 And from this time forward, not only death and the grave loſt all their dominion; but the dead bodies of the wicked, and their ſouls that had before exiſted in a ſeparate ſtate, were, in execution of the ſentence paſſed upon them, thrown with mighty vengeance into the dreadful abyſs of unquenchable fire, to be tormented there for ever with the devil, and the beaſt, and the falſe prophet. (*ver.* 10. and ſee *Matth.* iii. 12. and *Mark* ix. 43,—48.) This may be called emphatically *the ſecond death*, as it comes after that of the body, and is inexpreſſibly more terrible; and ſhall never end in a reſurrection to eternal life.

15 And whoſoever was not found written in the book of life, was caſt into the lake of fire.

15 And whoſoever he were, that, upon the opening of the books, and the critical and all-ſearching trial of that ſolemn day according to them, was not found, by the produced evidences, to have been written in the forementioned book of life, was immediately caſt into the burning lake to be tormented there for his evil deeds, as with the fire of divine wrath which never ſhall be quenched. But the righteous ſhall enter into life eternal, as will be repreſented in the next viſion.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a glorious time of light, liberty, love and peace, purity, joy and triumph, ſhall the church of true believers enjoy upon earth, after many years of darkneſs, trouble, and oppreſſion! The Lord Jeſus will bind and ſhut up Satan, that old ſerpent, the devil, as in priſon: The cauſe of truth and holineſs ſhall revive with great power, ſpirituality, and ſplendor: And they, who, with the conſtancy, patience, and ſpirit of martyrs, had courageouſly renounced all idolatry, wickedneſs, and error, and maintained a good profeſſion of Chriſt and of his goſpel in the worſt of times, ſhall, together with their ſucceſſors of the ſame ſpirit, live and reign with him, under his protection and ſmiles, for a thouſand years upon the earth. And O with what honour and acceptance will they then appear, like royal prieſts to him, and to God the Father through him! This will be a bleſſed revival from their former low and diſtreſſed circumſtances, and be as life from the dead, before the reſurrection of the body; and therefore may be figuratively called *the firſt reſurrection*;

NOTE.

* As the *Greek* word (ᾅδης) commonly ſignifies *the ſtate of ſeparate ſpirits*, I have taken it uniformly in this ſenſe, both here and in the next verſe, where it ſeems to make a much eaſier conſtruction of *death and hell* being *caſt into the lake of fire*, than any that I have met with.

furrection; and they, that bear a part in this, ſhall be ſecured from eternal miſery, which is *the ſecond death.* But how vain would it be to expect an everlaſting continuance of ſuch a happy ſtate on this earth! At the expiration of the thouſand years, Satan will, in ſome meaſure, be let looſe again for a little while, and be permitted to go forth, once more, to deceive the nations throughout the world, and gather all his numberleſs forces together from among them, who may be compared to *Gog* and *Magog*, thoſe laſt enemies of *Iſrael*, to attack and diſturb the ſaints, the beloved city of the Lord. But, bleſſed be God, this regained power and laſt effort will be very ſhort, and certainly end in the utter deſtruction of the devil, and all his adherents, who ſhall be conſumed by fire from heaven, and caſt into everlaſting flames with him: For Chriſt will ſet his throne for judgment, and the preſent frame of the earth and aerial heaven ſhall be diſſolved at his appearing. Then here ſhall be a general reſurrection of the dead, whereſoever they were buried, in the earth or in the ſea; and the final judgment of all mankind will, upon trial out of the books which ſhall be opened, publicly and unalterably determine the eternal ſtate of every one of them for inexpreſſible happineſs, or miſery, according to their reſpective works, whether they be good or bad. Then all the ungodly, whoſe bodies were dead, and whoſe ſouls had been in a ſeparate ſtate, and not found to be written in the book of life, ſhall, according to the juſt ſentence paſſed upon them for their evil deeds, be caſt into everlaſting burnings. But O the happineſs of the righteous; as deſcribed in the following chapter!

CHAP. XXI.

In conſequence of the final judgment, the bleſſed ſtate of the church-triumphant is repreſented in general, under the figures of a new heaven and new earth, and of the New Jeruſalem, *where God dwells, baniſhes all ſorrow from his people, and makes them completely happy, in oppoſition to the doleful ſtate of the wicked,* 1,—8. *And is more particularly deſcribed in its heavenly original, luſtre, and glory, ſecure defence and bright ornaments, under the figures of precious ſtones, high walls:* 12 *gates, guarded by* 12 *angels, and* 12 *foundations inſcribed with the names of* 12 *apoſtles,* 9,—14. *In its beautiful ſtructure, under the figure of an exceeding large city four ſquare, and conſiſting of the richeſt and fineſt materials,* 15,—21. *In its conſummate felicity, as irradiated with the immediate preſence of God and the Lamb, excluſive of all the comforts of this world, which are figured out by the light of the ſun and moon,* 22, 23. *And in the free acceſs of vaſt multitudes, of all nations and degrees, through the open gates of this city, the glory of which will ſwallow up all earthly honours, and the inhabitants of which are perfectly holy,* 24,—27.

PERIOD VII.

TEXT.

AND I ſaw a new heaven, and a new earth: for

PARAPHRASE.

AFTER the preceding viſions, which ended in the final judgment, another followed, in which I beheld the bleſſedneſs of the ſaints in glory*, as figured

NOTE.

* Thoſe interpreters that are for the *perſonal* reign of Chriſt *a thouſand years upon earth*, and ſome others with them, conſider the deſcription given of the glo-

rious

for the first heaven and the first earth were passed away; and there was no more sea.

gured out, like the state of the *New Testament* church, (*Isa.* lxv. 17. and lxvi. 22.) by a new heaven and new earth; which may be so called with respect to their form and qualities, signifying an entirely new fabric, as emblems of the new state of happiness that will then be introduced: For the former elementary heaven and this earth, not with respect to their substance, as though they were to be annihilated; but with respect to their frame and use, which are suited to the accommodation of its present inhabitants, and yet become noxious by reason of the fall of man, were dissolved: And I observed, that in this new and most excellent structure there was no *sea*, as there is in this terraqueous globe: Which might intimate that, in this new blissful state, there shall be no tumultuous passions, like *the troubled sea;* (Isa. lvii. 20.) nor any mischievous enemies to disturb the peace of its inhabitants, like *the beast that rose out of the sea*, (chap. xiii. 1.) or *the great whore that sat on many waters;* (chap. xvii. 1.) and so there shall *be no calamity* of any kind.

2 And

NOTE.

rious state of the church in this and the former part of the next chapter, as a large comment upon what had been more briefly said in the preceding chapter about the *Millenium;* and so confine it to the happy state of the church's thousand years reign with Christ on earth: And it must be owned that several passages, especially taken by themselves, seem to have an aspect that way. But it appears to me, that, viewing them in connection with the whole, they may fairly admit of a construction, (as may be seen in their places) very consistent with the heavenly glory; and that there are other expressions too high and strong to be applied to any state short of heaven itself. As, for instance, here the saints *see the face* of God and the Lamb, (*chap.* xxii. 3, 4.) which the Scripture always represents as peculiar to the heavenly state; and their reigning here is said to be *for ever and ever*, (chap. xxii. 5.) after the general resurrection and judgment, (*chap.* xx. 12, 13.) in opposition to their reigning a *thousand years on earth*, after the *first resurrection;* and it is not said of them that they shall not die, only that the SECOND DEATH *has no power on them.* (Chap. xx. 4, 6.) But it is said of this blessed state, *There shall be no more death.* (Chap. xxi. 4.) Other particulars of like sort will appear in the exposition. (See also *Durham*'s first lecture on the place.) And as it might justly be thought strange, that a prophecy, which is all along designed for the support, encouragement, and comfort of the church under all present tribulations, should give us no view of the final, complete, and everlasting happiness of all true believers, and suffering saints, in heaven; so it looks like perplexing and subverting the orderly progress of the prophecy, to suppose, that after an account of *the general judgment*, and *the misery of the wicked*, at the close of the last chapter, no notice should be taken of the *heavenly blessedness* of the righteous; but that, instead thereof, our thoughts should be carried back again to the *Millenium* which preceded them. Upon the whole, therefore, I am most inclined to think with others, that the regular series of the prophecy requires that, after it had led us to the universal judgment, and the punishment of the damned, (*chap.* xx. 11,—15.) it should of course go on to the state of the church-triumphant in heaven, as the crowning part of its noble design for raising the hopes and joys of believers under all present trials and afflictions; (vid. *Pol. Synopf.* and our note on 2 *Pet.* iii. 13.) Or that, if it be supposed to have any relation to the *Millenium*, it is only to what will then be fulfilled *in part*, as a lively figure of what will be *much more gloriously* completed in the heavenly state.

2 And I John saw the holy city, new Jerusalem, coming down from God out of heaven, prepared as a bride adorned for her husband.

2 And I *John* who had all these visions, and have faithfully recorded them, saw the church of Christ shining in her brightest glory; which was represented to me under the figure of the city of the Lord, as made perfect in holiness, even the *heavenly*, which may be styled the *new*, *Jerusalem*, on account of its excellency, and in contradistinction to the ancient and beloved city of that name upon earth; this being a *city that has foundations, whose builder and maker is God;* (Heb. xi. 10.) a plan of which was exhibited to my view, as descending from God's throne out of heaven toward me, to give me an opportunity of the more distinctly and critically observing it;* and to assure me that its original is from heaven, that no such city was ever on earth, and that all its glory shall be perfected in heaven. It made a most beautiful and delightful appearance, which may be compared to that of an amiable bride, richly adorned, and quite ready to meet her bridegroom on the day of solemnizing their marriage; this holy city being an emblem of the church, which is espoused to Christ, and shall then appear in robes of righteousness and of immortal light and honour, and be *presented faultless before the presence of his glory* with exceeding joy. (*Jude*, ver. 24.)

3 And I heard a great voice out of heaven, saying, Behold, the tabernacle of God *is* with men, and he will dwell with them, and they shall be his people, and God himself shall be with them, *and be* their God.

3 And the meaning of this vision was explained by a loud articulate voice, which I heard, as coming out from heaven, saying, in allusion to the *Shechinah*, which appeared in the tabernacle, as an illustrious token of the divine presence among the *Israelites*, Behold, God has fixed his most glorious residence in the midst of his heavenly church, which consists of the whole number of his chosen, redeemed, and called from among men of all nations: And he will henceforth dwell perpetually in the most immediate manner with them, and they shall be owned and honoured by him as his peculiar people, and the great God himself will intimately commune with them; and, suitable to the near relation into which he has taken them, as their covenant God and Father, will make up a complete portion of all possible happiness to them in the full enjoyment of himself for ever and ever. (*Chap.* xxii. 5.)

4 And

NOTE.

* Though, *the holy city, the new Jerusalem*, is represented as *coming from God out of heaven*, here, and in ver. 10. This may relate to its *draught* or *model's* visibly descending from thence to the apostle *John*, that he might distinctly view it, as the *sheet* did to *Peter* in his vision, (*Acts* x. 11) rather than to *the place* where the city itself should be. And the same manner of expression follows with relation to the *great voice out of heaven*, which our apostle *heard*, ver. 3. (εκ του ουρανου) However the *heavenly state* itself is expressed by the very same phrase, *chap.* iii. 12. and is called *our house, which is from heaven*, 2 Cor. v. 2. (εξ ουρανου)

4 And God shall wipe away all tears from their eyes; and there shall be no more death, neither sorrow, nor crying, neither shall there be any more pain: for the former things are passed away.

4 And in this state of heavenly bliss, God, by his immediate presence, will not only relieve their sorrows, but entirely remove them, that they may never have the least occasion to weep, or ever shed a tear, as formerly, on any account whatsoever; and there shall be no more mortality or liableness to death, as there was while they lived in the lower world; nor shall there be any thing of a grievous nature to afflict them; nor any outcry, (κραυγη) by reason of oppression, frights, or fears; nor shall there be any more pain or sickness of body, or anguish of spirit, which they were subject to while they dwelt in mortal flesh: For all defective and uncomfortable things, and sin, the root and cause of them all, are in that glorious state absolutely and eternally banished to the remotest distance from them: They are all over and gone, never to return, that nothing may ever interrupt or abate their consummate happiness; which is more than can be said of any condition on this side heaven. (See the notes on *ver.* 1. and *chap.* xx. 4.)

5 And he that sat upon the throne, said, Behold, I make all things new. And he said unto me, Write: for these words are true and faithful.

5 And as an additional confirmation of all this, The blessed * God, who has been often represented in my visions, as sitting upon the *throne*, said, Behold with admiration and joy, I make an entire change, by my power and grace, in the present state of all things, and completely new-form all the happy and holy inhabitants of the new world. And these are matters of so high importance for supporting and encouraging the faith, hope, and patience of the church, under all its tribulations on earth, that he commanded me to record them in writing for their comfort: For, said he, all these declarations are infallibly true, and shall faithfully be performed to their eternal joy.

6 And he said unto me, It is done. I am Alpha and Omega,

6 And, for their further encouragement, he said to me, with respect to this wonderful change, The consummation of all things is now come; all the elect

NOTE.

* *He that sat upon the throne*, may possibly be meant of Christ: For I do not find that, in either of the foregoing or following visions, God the Father is ever represented, as immediately speaking and giving orders to the apostle; and Christ had appeared, as seated upon *a great white throne* for judgment, (*chap.* xx. 11.) and might here call himself *Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end*, (ver. 6.) which in several places of this book are titles, that, I think, he assumes to himself. (See the notes on *chap.* i. 4, 8.)—The promise to *him that overcomes*, (ver. 7.) evidently agrees with, and is a summary of, all his repeated promises to *him that overcomes*, in the second and third chapters; and his adding here, *I will be his God, and he shall be my son*, may be said by him, as well as by the Father; since he is called *the mighty God*, and *the everlasting Father*, (Isa. ix. 6.) and his people are called *his seed*, (chap. liii. 10.) and he is said to *give them power to become the sons of God.* (John i. 12.) And as he will present them to himself a glorious church; (*Eph.* v. 27.) so he will present them as *his children* to his Father, saying, *Behold, I, and the children which God has given me.* (Heb. ii. 13.)

mega, the beginning and the end: I will give unto him that is athirst, of the fountain of the water of life freely.

are gathered in, the whole scheme of providence and redemption, and of my love and grace to them is completed; and all the prophecies, contained in this and the foregoing visions relating to their sufferings and glory, and to the destruction of their enemies, are now brought to their final issue. To this he added concerning himself, in allusion to the first and last letters of the *Greek* alphabet, I am *Alpha* and *Omega;* the Author and Finisher both of the old and new worlds, and of the happiness of my people from first to last; and am unchangeably existent, eternally before, and after all these dispensations. (See the note on *chap.* i. 8.) And whosoever is sensible of his wants, and earnestly desirous of spiritual and heavenly blessings, even unto eternal life, like one that is vehemently athirst, and longs for refreshment, to him will I freely, of my own mere favour, give abundant satisfaction and delight, to the utmost of his wishes, in my immediate presence; which may be compared to an everflowing and overflowing fountain of life and consolation, whose perpetually springing waters never fail.

7 He that overcometh shall inherit all things: and I will be his God, and he shall be my son.

7 He who, warring a good warfare, with faith and patience, against sin, Satan, and his instruments, and against all the temptations of this present evil world, gains the victory over them, in humble dependence on my strengthenings, shall be possessed of an everlasting inheritance of glory, and of every thing that can contribute to his happiness: And I, the all-comprehending good, and rightful disposer of all things, will be his God and portion for ever; and he shall be partaker of all the exalted privileges of his adoption, as my son. (See the note on *ver.* 5.)

8 But the fearful, and unbelieving, and the abominable, and murderers, and whoremongers, and forcerers, and idolaters, and all liars, shall have their part in the lake which burneth with fire and brimstone: which is the second death.

8 But, on the contrary, they that are ashamed, or refuse to own and honour me, through cowardice, or fear of reproaches and sufferings on that account; and they that reject the grace of the gospel, through unbelief, and are distrustful of my power, mercy, and promises to support them under, and carry them through all tribulations to eternal glory; and flagitious sinners, that indulge unnatural lusts, like the detestable *Sodomites;* and murderers in heart or deed; and especially infamous persecutors of my people unto death; and unclean persons, that are addicted to fornication, or adultery; and dealers with familiar spirits, or pretenders so to be; and worshippers of images, or of any that are not by nature God; and they that speak falsehoods and lies in hypocrisy, with intent to deceive and impose upon others: All and every one of these, living and dying in impenitence and unbelief, shall have their deserved portion of the most exquisite torments, like persons thrown alive into

to

to a great collection of burning-hot materials, such as fire and brimstone; which may be called the second and most terrible death, as it comes after the death of the body, and is an absolute deprivation of all comfort, and an endless intolerable complication of all possible misery.

9 And there came unto me one of the seven angels, which had the seven vials full of the seven last plagues, and talked with me, saying, Come hither, I will shew thee the bride, the Lamb's wife.

9 Then, to give me a further account of the blessedness of the righteous, there drew near to me one of the seven angels, that were represented in a former vision, (*chap.* xvi. 1. and xvii. 1.) as employed in executing the seven last judgments, which were signified by pouring out the seven last cups or vials of the wrath of God upon his enemies for their destruction; and he in a free and friendly manner called to me, saying, Come up hither, and I will set before you a particular and distinct emblematical view of the state of the church in her advancement to heavenly glory, suitable to her dignity as the bride, which Christ, the Lamb that was slain, has purchased with his own blood, and espoused to himself in an everlasting covenant, that she, when fully prepared for him by the graces of his Spirit, might celebrate her nuptials with him, as her glorious husband, in all the solemnity, splendor, and joy of the highest marriage-festival.

10 And he carried me away in the spirit to a great and high mountain, and shewed me that great city, the holy Jerusalem, descending out of heaven from God.

10 And this angel, methought, in the visions of my mind, conducted me to an exceeding great and lofty mountain, to give me the advantage of a clear and full prospect; and there he exhibited to my view a grand and glorious city of vast extent, and filled with an innumerable multitude of inhabitants, which, in allusion to *Jerusalem*'s being called *the holy city*, (Matth. iv. 5.) bears that name, as being consecrated to God, and thoroughly sanctified by his Spirit: And I distinctly beheld the model of it, as coming down from God out of heaven, the habitation of his immediate presence. (See the note on *ver.* 2.)

11 Having the glory of God: and her light *was* like unto a stone most precious, even like a jasper-stone, clear as crystal;

11 This city of the living God, the heavenly *Jerusalem*, was figured out to me as filled with the divine glory, the visible symbol of which formerly appeared in the *Jewish* tabernacle and temple, as the token of God's dwelling in a way of special grace and favour there: And its light of knowledge, purity, honour, and joy, was illustriously bright, like a most excellent stone, even like a splendid jasper-stone, as shining as crystal.

12 And had a wall great and high, *and* had twelve gates; and at the gates twelve angels, and names written thereon, which

12 And it was further represented to me, as a city of the greatest beauty, strength, and security, encompassed about with an exceeding thick and high wall: Which may be considered as an emblem of the almighty and invincible power of the great God and Saviour, for the safety and defence of all its blessed inhabitants:

which are *the names* of the twelve tribes of the children of Israel.

inhabitants: In the wall there appeared twelve gates of entrance from all quarters; which might intimate that the only door of salvation by Jesus Christ had been opened, through all parts of the earth, in the ministry of the twelve apostles: And at the twelve gates, methought, I saw twelve angels, one at each gate, standing as guards of state at every avenue of the city and palace of the great King, and as ministring spirits to open the gates to all the heirs of salvation, and to shut them against all that were not written in the Lamb's book of life: (*ver.* 27.) And I saw an inscription of names, one upon each gate, which represented the names of the twelve tribes of the children of *Israel;* and may be considered as emblematical of the whole church of Christ, which was typified by them, and consisted of all the spiritual *Israel*, that were admitted into this glorious city, there to abide for ever.

13 On the east, three gates; on the north, three gates; on the south three gates; and on the west, three gates.

13 The position of these gates on each side of this large four-square city, (*ver.* 16.) appeared to be in the following manner, answerable to *Ezekiel*'s vision of its type, after the names of the tribes of *Israel.* (Ezek. xlviii. 31,—34.) On the east side were three gates, upon which were written the names of *Joseph*, *Benjamin*, and *Dan:* On the north side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Reuben*, *Judah*, and *Levi:* On the south side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Simeon*, *Issachar*, and *Zebulon:* And on the west side three gates, upon which were written the names of *Gad*, *Asher*, and *Naphtali*, to intimate that none, who in reality belong to the true *Israel* of God, shall be excluded from this *general assembly and church of the first-born.* (Heb. xii. 23.)

14 And the wall of the city had twelve foundations, and in them the names of the twelve apostles of the Lamb.

14 And the wonderful wall of this magnificent city was represented as having twelve foundations, on which (in allusion to the custom of inscribing the names of those that lay the first stone in buildings, for a perpetual remembrance of them) there seemed to be written the names of the twelve apostles of Christ, the Lamb of God, who redeemed the church with his own blood, and was laid in the doctrine and ministrations of those first and chief master-builders, as its only foundation, *Jesus Christ himself being the chief corner-stone.* (Eph. ii. 20.)

15 And he that talked with me, had a golden reed to measure the city, and the gates thereof, and the wall thereof.

15 And the angel that communed with me appeared as having in his hand a measuring reed of pure gold, a suitable emblem of the pure and spotless state of this glorious city, and of all that pertained to it: With this, he took the dimensions of the city itself, and of its gates, and of its wall; which may be considered

fidered as a figurative representation of its being a state of the most beautiful order and proportion; and that all admissions to it, and securities in it, are exactly according to the perfect rule of the uncorrupted word of God.

16 And the city lieth four-square, and the length is as large as the breadth: and he measured the city with the reed, twelve thousand furlongs; the length, and the breadth, and the height of it are equal.

16 And it appeared by the measurement, that the city was just four-square, of the very same dimensions every way; the length being exactly equal to the breadth; which might intimate the perfection, stability, and uniformity of that blessed state of the church. And in measuring this heavenly city with the golden reed, it was found to be in compass twelve thousand furlongs, which, reckoning eight furlongs to a mile, are fifteen hundred miles; each of the four sides containing the length of three hundred seventy-five miles; a city of prodigious extent for the reception of an innumerable multitude of blessed inhabitants, far, yea, incomparably far beyond all that ever was known upon earth. The length and breadth of it appeared to be exactly equal, one to the other; * and its height bore a just proportion to its length and breadth; which may be considered as an emblem of the vast capaciousness of the heavenly city for receiving and accommodating the whole church, when collected altogether, and of its entire harmony and beauty in every part.

17 And he measured the wall thereof, an hundred *and* forty *and* four cubits, according to the measure of a man, that is, of the angel.

17 Then, methought, he proceeded to measure the height of the wall of this holy city, and found that it rose up, from the foundation to the top, one hundred and forty-four cubits, according to the common way of men's measuring from the elbow to the end of the middle-finger, which is the same that was used by the angel in measuring the height of this wall; and so it appeared to be out of all danger of ever being scaled and invaded; and may be considered as a figurative representation of the absolute safety of the saints, in the heavenly world, from all assaults or disturbances from their enemies.

18 And the building of the wall

18 And the materials of this unsurmountable wall were represented in my vision, not as consisting of any thing

NOTE.

* Mr. *Lowman* observes that it would be out of all proportion to suppose, that either the wall or buildings of the city are to be understood as of equal height with the length and breadth; and that the numbers in this and the next verse are evidently *typical*. (Perhaps he meant *mystical*.) In one, which is the measure of the breadth and length of the city, the mystical number twelve, taken from the twelve apostles, is multiplied by a thousand; and in the other, which seems to be the measure of the height of the wall, the same mystical number, twelve, is multiplied into itself; and so the height of the wall is represented to be one hundred forty-four cubits, which make about seventy-two yards, according to the lesser cubit, or about eighty-six yards, according to the greater. (See his notes on these two verses.)

wall of it was of jasper; and the city *was* pure gold, like unto clear glass.

thing so mean and brittle as brick, or common building-stone; but of the most durable, sumptuous, strong, and beautiful jasper-stone, to render it impregnable and secure against all decay, as well as surprisingly magnificent; which may be considered as an emblem of the everlasting and unchangeable state of blessedness and glory: And the august mansions of the city seemed to be all made of massy gold; or, at least, over-laid with the finest and purest gold, so exquisitely polished, that it appeared as bright and glittering, as the most shining mirror or clearest crystal; which may be considered as an emblem of the incomparable grandeur, riches, and delights of the heavenly state.

19 And the foundations of the wall of the city *were* garnished with all manner of precious stones. The first foundation *was* a jasper; the second, a sapphire; the third, a chalcedony; the fourth, an emerald;
20 The fifth, sardonyx; the sixth, sardius; the seventh, chrysolite; the eighth, beryl; the ninth, a topaz; the tenth, a chrysoprasus; the eleventh, a jacinth; the twelfth, an amethyst.

19, 20 And the foundations of the city, which, though really but *one*, yet, having been laid by the preaching of the twelve apostles, were represented as twelve: (*ver.* 14.) These, methought, were beautified and adorned with inlayings of all sorts of the most excellent, solid, and dazzling stones, one in one part, and another in another, in allusion to the names of the twelve tribes of *Israel*, which were severally engraven on the twelve precious stones in the high priest's breast-plate; (*Exod.* xxviii. 15,—21.) the appearance of such precious stones on the foundations of this wall, might be considered as an emblem of the perfection, glory, and preciousness of Christ, the only foundation of the church, on which their names were in a manner inscribed, as those, whom the Father had given him, and who are built upon him, as their foundation. * The first part of it was represented as adorned with a *jasper;* the second, with a *sapphire;* the third, with a *chalcedony;* the fourth, with an *emerald;* the fifth, with a *sardonyx;* the sixth, with a *sardius;* the seventh, with a *chrysolith;* the eighth, with a *beryl;* the ninth, with a *topaz;* the tenth, with a *chrysoprasus;* the eleventh, with a *jacinth;* and the twelfth, with an *amethyst:* All which taken together, as being stones of the most illustrious and valuable kind, might figure out the variety and perfection of the glory of Christ,

NOTE.

* I cannot pretend to determine *what*, or whether any thing *particularly*, was signified, in the mystical way, by the variety of these *precious stones*.—But as far as I can learn from the best accounts I have met with of the stones *themselves*, the *jasper* is a stone of several colours, the most excellent of which is green, spotted with red or purple: The *sapphire* is of a sky-coloured blue, transparent, and very hard: The *chalcedony* is of a shining grey, clouded with yellow, or purple, or blue: The *emerald* is of an exceeding fine green: The *sardonix* is of a pale red: The *sardius* is like, if not the same with the *cornelian* stone, of a blood-colour: The *chrysolith* is green, with a shade of yellow: The *beryl* is of a pale green: The *topaz* is of a gold colour, transparent and hard: The *chrysoprasus* is of a yellowish green: The *jacinth* is of a violet or purple colour: The *amethyst* is of a colour nearly resembling the *jacinth:* And the *pearl* is a round, white, hard, and shining substance; and is commonly bred in a shell-fish.

Christ, the foundation; and of the church and its blessings, that are founded upon him.

21 And the twelve gates *were* twelve pearls; every several gate was of one pearl: and the street of the city *was* pure gold, as it were transparent glass.

21 And the twelve gates of this glorious city of the living God were represented to me, as consisting of twelve pearls of the greatest worth and astonishing magnitude, each gate being only one large pearl; which might be emblematical of Christ, as the pearl of great price, and the only door of salvation and of entrance into heaven: And, methought, I saw a large opening, that may be compared to a vastly spacious street, * where the inhabitants of the city met in full assembly; the pavement of which was of the finest burnished gold, shining with a lustre as clear and bright as crystal; which might be an emblem of the perfect purity, pleasure, and conversation of the general assembly and church of the first-born, in their holy and delightful communion one with another, and with their God in his immediate presence.

22 And I saw no temple therein: for the Lord God almighty, and the Lamb, are the temple of it.

22 And though the allusion was all along to the city of *Jerusalem;* yet there was this remarkable difference, I saw no representation of a temple in this heavenly *Jerusalem*, as there was in the *Millenium*-state itself, in which the *temple of God was opened:* (see the paraphrase on *chap.* xi. 19.) For the great and blessed Lord God omnipotent, and Jesus Christ, the Lamb that was slain, are instead of a temple, as they dwell in an incomparably more glorious, visible, and immediate manner here, (*chap.* xxii. 4.) than ever was seen in the earthly temple at *Jerusalem*, or in the latter day-glory; which might intimate, that all divine ordinances, as the appointed mediums of communion between God and his church in this world, shall entirely cease in the heavenly state; when, instead of them, the immediate presence of God essentially considered, as inclusive of Father, Son, and Spirit, shall be *all in all*, (see the note on 1 *Cor.* xv. 28.) with no other medium of conveying felicity and glory to the heavenly citizens, than the person of Christ, as Mediator, and God-man, in whom the glory of all divine counsels, perfections, and performances, in their most amiable aspect, will shine, as in their brightest mirror, for ever.

23 And the city had no need of the sun, neither of the moon

23 And so illustrious was this city in my vision, that there was no manner of occasion either for the sun by day, or the moon by night, to enlighten it; or

NOTE.

* Dr. *Hammond* and chap. xxii. 2. observes, that here, *The street*, or *broad place* of the city, denotes *a place of concourse and resort;* and so *synagogues*, or *assemblies*, and *streets*, are used together in the same sense, *Matth.* vi. 5. And *Grotius* understands *the street of the city* to signify *a place of public assembly*, as in 2 *Chron.* xxxii. 6. and *Job* xxix. 7.

moon to shine in it: for the glory of God did lighten it, and the Lamb *is* the light thereof.

or for any creature to adorn or comfort its inhabitants, as there is in this world, and will be till the dissolution of all things: For the glory of God himself, a symbol of which was given in the *Shechinah* that filled *Solomon*'s temple, (1 *Kings* viii. 10, 11.) and in the *transfiguration* of our blessed Lord, (*Matth.* xvii. 2. and 2 *Pet.* i. 17.) shone in the most perfect manner to illuminate the whole city; and the glorious Lamb, as in office-capacity, and clothed with human nature, is the purchaser of admission to this light, and the clear medium of it; and as God, in essential union with the Father and Spirit, inseparably concurs with them in diffusing it.

24 And the nations of them which are saved, shall walk in the light of it: and the kings of the earth do bring their glory and honour into it.

24 And those people of all nations of the earth, who, through faith in the blood of the Lamb, are saved from sin and the wrath to come, shall be admitted to enjoy its delightful and illustrious light, and to walk in sweet and holy communion together in the midst of it. And as the converted princes and potentates of the earth had employed all their riches, power, and honour, to subserve the interests of this celestial city; so they bring the products of their good influence into it, and chearfully resign up all their dignity and authority for it, counting them as nothing, in comparison with it; the glory of which, methought, appeared to be inexpressibly more grand and beautiful, than if all the magnificence and precious treasures of the kingdoms of this world had been collected together to enrich and adorn it.

25 And the gates of it shall not be shut at all by day: for there shall be no night there.

25 And so absolutely safe are the inhabitants of this city in their sublime mansions, not merely by the height and strength of its walls, and the guard of angels, (*ver.* 12.) but principally and supremely by the immediate protection of the divine presence, that there will be no need of shutting up its gates in the daytime, to secure them against invading enemies; (as is usual to do by cities on earth, when any danger threatens them) and if not in the day, not at all: For there shall be no night to favour any attempts against them; nor the least darkness of any kind, whether natural or civil, moral or spiritual, to interrupt, or obscure the light of glory, that will perpetually shine with *meridian*-brightness upon them.

26 And they shall bring the glory and honour of the nations into it.

26 And all that come to dwell there will bring the holy fruits of their faithful improvements of their riches and honours into it, and will gladly surrender for it whatever they had possessed of wealth, grandeur, and honour, in any nations of the lower world: All these glories will be swallowed up in that, which infinitely excells them; and its splendor may well be considered, as vastly superior to all that could be imagined,

gined, were all the affluence, gaiety, and magnificence of the highest ranks of people on earth to be amassed together, and laid out to embellish it.

27 And there shall in no wise enter into it any thing that defileth, neither *whatsoever* worketh abomination, or *maketh* a lie: but they which are written in the Lamb's book of life.

27 And so perfectly pure and holy is this heavenly city, that though its gates are continually open; (*ver.* 25.) yet, as the uncircumcised and unclean were forbid entrance into the holy city of *Jerusalem;* (Isa. lii. 1.) so no person or thing, (πᾶν) no evil temper or disposition, thought, word, or deed, that is morally defiled by any iniquity, or is of a defiling nature, shall ever be permitted, on any account whatsoever, to enter into it: Nor any one that lives and dies in any known sin, which, whatever it be, God is of *purer eyes than to look upon it,* without detestation; (*Habak.* i. 13.) and particularly the sin of *idolatry,* which is, by way of eminence, *the abominable thing that he hates;* (Jer. xliv. 4.) nor any one that contrives, forges, or utters falshoods with an intent to deceive; not one of either of these: But they, and they only, (*chap.* xx. 15.) shall be admitted into this blissful state, that were registered, as it were by name, in the Lamb's book of life, which contains all those that were given him by the Father, to be redeemed, and sanctified, and brought safe to glory, and that, by holy fruits and effects, shall be proved to be so in the great day of account.

RECOLLECTIONS.

Who can conceive the immense felicity and glory of the church triumphant in heaven! All the images of light, beauty, honour, and grandeur, and of riches, safety, and delight, that we are acquainted with, are but faint representations of it. It is all new, and surpassing every thing that can be found, or imagined in the present frame of the universe. It is the holy city of the living God, shining in all his glory; a city built on Christ, who was laid, as its only foundation, by the ministry of the twelve apostles; and its inhabitants consist of the whole number of the chosen and redeemed, called and faithful, as collected together, and brought into it, from all nations of the earth; its gates being open to them, who were typified by the twelve tribes of *Israel.* It is a state of complete and immortal bliss, absolutely secure and free from all darkness, pain, and uneasiness of every kind, and from death itself; those former things being passed away: And it is enlivened with all the joys and honours of a public solemnization of Christ's marriage with his church; it is inexpressibly more glorious than the most splendid city of beautiful, strong, and lofty walls, erected on solid foundations, and all embellished as with the most precious glittering stones; and magnificently adorned, as with gates of the most costly pearl, at which angels stand, like officers of state; and as if its streets were all over paved with the finest polished gold. All the riches and grandeur of the greatest monarchs, and of all nations of the earth, are so far exceeded by it, swallowed up in it, and chearfully resigned for it, as not worthy to be compared with its heavenly treasures. It is illuminated, honoured, and blessed with the immediate presence of God and the Lamb, as shining with amiable and divine majesty on their throne of glory, and as the beginners and perfecters of its happiness; insomuch that it needs no creature-enjoyments, like the sun and moon; nor any ordinances, like the temple at *Jerusalem,* to assist its heavenly entertainments: For God in Christ will be their God, and the everlasting fountain of all that is great and good; and they shall inherit all things, to the utmost of their

wiſhes, as the gift of free grace; and ſhall live together in holy, harmonious, and tranſporting fellowſhip with God, and Chriſt, and one another, in its ever-ſhining and unclouded light. But, alas! all that are aſhamed of, or afraid to own the Lord, and every unbeliever and habitual liar, with all other impenitent ſinners, that are abominable in God's ſight, ſhall be utterly excluded from the heavenly ſtate, and have their portion in everlaſting burnings, which is the ſecond death. But, in oppoſition to theſe, all they, and none but they, that are written in the Lamb's book of life, as proved by its holy fruits, ſhall be admitted to the ſublime enjoyments of this bleſſed city. Theſe are the true and faithful ſayings of God, which ſhall certainly have their full accompliſhment, to the inſupportable miſery of graceleſs ſinners, and the conſummate joy of ſaints for ever.

CHAP. XXII.

The deſcription of the heavenly ſtate is carried on under the figures of the water and tree of life, and of the throne of God and the Lamb, 1,—5. *And, for a concluſion of the whole, the truth and certain accompliſhment of all theſe prophetic viſions are confirmed, by way of dialogue between the conducting angel, Chriſt himſelf, and the apoſtle* John, *who was forbidden to worſhip the angel, and ordered not to ſeal the prophecies of this book, which were ſoon to begin to be fulfilled in their order, and are ſo ſacred as not to be added to, or diminiſhed, upon pain of excluſion from all the bleſſings promiſed in them, which ſhall be conferred on the righteous, and denied to the wicked, when Chriſt ſhall come (as he ſaid he quickly would) with a reward to every one, according to his works,* 6,—16. *To which the Spirit and the bride ſay, Come; and* John *adds his Amen, and cloſes all with the uſual apoſtolic benediction,* 17,—21.

TEXT.

AND he ſhewed me a pure river of water of life, clear as cryſtal, proceeding out of the throne of God, and of the Lamb.

PARAPHRASE.

AND the conducting angel gave me ſome further emblematical repreſentations of the heavenly *Jeruſalem*, by a viſion of a pure river, as clear as cryſtal, ſtreaming freely and plentifully out of the fountain of the water of life, (*chap.* xxi. 6.) not through ordinances, but immediately from the throne of God and the Lamb, who are *one* in the divine nature, and whoſe throne, as divine perſons, is *one*, from whence all bleſſings are derived in their utmoſt purity and perfection unto eternal life; which, in alluſion to the river that watered the garden of *Eden*, (Gen. ii. 10.) or to the waters in *Ezekiel*'s viſion, (*chap.* xlvii. 1, —12.) may be conſidered as an emblem of *the fulneſs of joy*, that is in God's immediate *preſence*, and of the immenſe *pleaſures that are at his right-hand for evermore.* (Pſ. xvi. 11.)

2 In the midſt of the ſtreet of it, and on either ſide of the river, *was there*

2 In the midſt of the chief place of concourſe, or principal ſtreet of the heavenly city, (ſee the note on *chap.* xxi. 21.) and on each ſide of the river which watered it, methought, there ſtood a delightful row of

there the tree of life, which bare twelve *manner of* fruits, *and* yielded her fruit every month; and the leaves of the tree *were* for the healing of the nations.

of a most excellent kind of trees,* like those that *Ezekiel* saw in his vision, *on the bank of the river, one on one side, and one on the other;* (chap. xlvii. 7, 12.) Which may also be considered, in allusion to the tree of life in the midst of the earthly paradise, (*Gen.* ii. 9.) as an emblem of Christ, and of the immortal life of happiness, which all its inhabitants derive from him: And, in this figurative way, he was represented, in allusion to the twelve tribes of *Israel*, and the twelve apostles of the Lamb, (*chap.* xxi. 12, 14.) as yielding twelve sorts of fruit, to signify the greatest variety and abundance of the most delicious, spiritual, and heavenly entertainments, to the full satisfaction of *all* the *Israel* of God, according to the doctrine of the holy apostles: And this emblematical tree produced its pleasant ripe fruits, not once a-year only, like common trees; but continually, month after month, without the least intermission, or defect, for ever: And such was the excellent virtue of this tree of life, that its very leaves had a sovereign efficacy to perfect and maintain perpetual health and ease, and to prevent all infirmities, pains, and diseases in the souls, or bodies of the saints, that were admitted to partake of it, from among the various nations of the earth.

3 And there shall be no more curse: but the throne of God and of the Lamb shall be in it; and his servants shall serve him.

3 Yea, so absolutely complete and confirmed is their happiness, that the curse, together with all its dismal effects and consequences, which the fall brought upon all mankind, and which came upon their first parents in the garden of *Eden*, (Gen. iii. 16,—19.) shall be actually, thoroughly, and finally removed from them for ever; so that there shall be no remainder of sin or sorrow, or any accursed person or thing there: But the glorious throne of God and of the Lamb, whose divine throne is *one*, shall be ever abiding in it, as the fountain of its felicity and delight, (*ver.* 1.) without mixture or allay; and his faithful servants shall pay their solemn homage in the sublimest adorations and praises, and shall do the will of their God and Saviour in the most perfect manner, with all alacrity, constancy, and delight.

4 And

NOTE.

* Mr. *Kennicott* thinks, that this *tree of life* alludes to the *trees on one side, and on the other of the river*, in *Ezekiel*'s vision, rather than to the tree of life in *Paradise*. (See his *Dissertation* on the tree of life, p. 93,—97.) And yet he conjectures that *the tree of life* in *Paradise* was not a *single*, or *one particular extraordinary tree*, (p. 75.) and shews, (p. 81.) that the word (עץ) *a tree*, which is *singular*, is used *plurally*, and rendered *trees*, Gen. iii. 2, 3.; and signifies the whole *genus* of trees, through the history of the creation and fall; unless where it is confined by the emphatic article, or a necessary restriction in the sense.——But, perhaps, *John*'s vision was only of one tree of life, whose branches extended to both sides of the river.

4 And they shall see his face: and his name *shall be* in their foreheads.

4 And they shall have a beatific vision of the blessed God, like *seeing face to face;* (Matth. v. 8. and 1 Cor. xiii. 12.) and shall behold the Lord Jesus in all his glory, as God man, and *see him as he is* with their bodily eyes, as well as with the eyes of their minds; (*John* xvii. 24. and 1 *John* iii. 2.) and, *beholding his face in righteousness. they shall bear his likeness*, (Ps. xvii. 15.) as conspicuously as if his name and the characters of his glorious and holy image were written on their foreheads, in like manner as *Holiness to the Lord*, was engraven on *Aaron's* mitre, which was put upon his forehead. (*Exod.* xxviii. 36,—38.)

5 And there shall be no night there; and they need no candle, neither light of the sun; for the Lord God giveth them light: and they shall reign for ever and ever.

5 And so illustrious will be their light of knowledge, purity, and joy, that there shall not be the least darkness of error, sin, or affliction; and such will be the perfection of this light, that they will have no occasion for creature-assistances to add to their comfort, such as the light of a candle, which is wont in this world to relieve the darkness of the night; or the light of the sun in the firmament to enlighten it by day; which may be considered as emblematical intimations that they shall neither have any need of the faint light of the ceremonial law; no, nor of the clearer light of the gospel, and of its ordinances of divine worship: For the Lord Jehovah himself is the immediate fountain of light to irradiate and fill them with his glory, that *in his light they may see light*, in all its beauteous and transforming manifestations: (*Psal.* xxxvi. 9.) And they shall reign, like kings on their thrones, with dignity and honour in his blissful presence to all eternity, which will make them a rich amends for all the tribulations that they endured with faith and patience on earth for his name's sake. (See 2 *Cor.* iv. 17.)

6 And he said unto me, These sayings *are* faithful and true. And the Lord God of the holy prophets sent his angel to shew unto his servants the things which must shortly be done.

6 And the conducting angel, having led me through the visions, which ended in the final happiness and glory of the saints, said to me, All the things that you have heard and seen, and recorded for the use, encouragement, and benefit of the church in all ages, shall be faithfully accomplished, and are infallibly true, to be fulfilled in their order. And the Lord Jesus, who in his original nature is, with the Father and Spirit, the only living and true God, (see the note on *chap.* i. 1.) and who inspired and authorised his holy prophets of old to foretel the things which were revealed to them, relating to his sufferings, and the glory that should follow, (1 *Pet.* i. 11.) has sent me, his angel, with these divine messages to make known to his servants, of the New Testament-church, the things which shall begin to be performed very

very soon after this revelation of them, till they be gradually completed in their proper series; and the fulfilment of them all will be in a little space of time, compared with eternity, when they will issue in the consummate happiness of the followers of the Lamb.

7 Behold, I come quickly: Blessed *is* he that keepeth the sayings of the prophecy of this book.

7 In further confirmation of all these things, Jesus himself spake, (*ver.* 16, 20.) saying, Observe with attention, admiration, and joy, I am just ready to begin the accomplishment of them, and to carry them on in their proper order, till all shall be fulfilled; and, comparatively speaking, I will ere long come, to put an end to all the troubles of my people, and perfect their felicity, in the heavenly state. He is a happy creature indeed, and shall be inexpressibly so for ever, who, in the several periods of accomplishment, carefully considers, and chearfully embraces, and behaves suitable to the holy, encouraging, and comfortable design of the revelations, which are made in the prophecies recorded in this book, for the use of the church in all ages, till the whole scene shall be finished.

8 And I John saw these things, and heard *them*. And when I had heard and seen, I fell down to worship before the feet of the angel, which shewed me these things.

8 And I *John*, to whom the revelations were made, had all along visionary prospects of all these important things, and heard what was said to explain and confirm them. And when in this manner I had been informed of all the particulars that have been recited, I was wonderfully affected with them, and in a sudden rapture, which almost overpowered my mind, (see the note on *chap.* xix. 10.) I again, through want of recollecting my former error and rebuke for it, prostrated myself, in a posture of adoration, at the feet of the angel, who, by Christ's commission, as I afterwards found, (*ver.* 9.) had discovered these things to me.

9 Then saith he unto me, See *thou do it* not: for I am thy fellow-servant, and of thy brethren the prophets, and of them which keep the sayings of this book: worship God.

9 Upon his perceiving this, he instantly reproved, and prevented me, saying, Take heed of paying any religious homage to me, who have no claim to it: For I am not Jesus the Saviour, but only one of his servants, that worship, and adore him, and do his will; and am not the author of these revelations, but a messenger, like yourself, to communicate them to you, as you are to do to the church; and I have herein only acted the part of a fellow-servant with you, and with your brethren in office, the prophets, apostles, and ministers of the gospel, and with the saints, that shew a just regard to the things delivered in this prophetic book. Let therefore all your adoration, or religious worship, be paid to the only true God, to whom alone it is due: For the nature of things, and the divine command have fixed an unalterable

terable obligation to *worship the Lord thy God, and him only to serve.* (Matth. iv. 10.)

10 And he saith unto me, Seal not the sayings of the prophecy of this book: for the time is at hand.

10 And, the angel, or rather Christ himself, * charged me, not to conceal the things contained in this prophecy, as though they were to be sealed up in the book which I had wrote, and so hid from the notice of the church, relating to the troubles they are to expect, and the glorious issues of them: For the time draws nigh, (said he) in which they shall begin to take place, and be carried on in a due series, till they all be fulfilled, which, compared with the succeeding eternity, will be but a little while hence.

11 He that is unjust, let him be unjust still: and he which is filthy, let him be filthy still: and he that is righteous, let him be righteous still: and he that is holy, let him be holy still.

11 Then the state and condition of all mankind shall be unalterably fixed, never to admit of any after-change; but the decisive irreversible sentence shall go forth, saying, He that is destitute of righteousness to give him acceptance with God, as found to be an evil-doer, Let him for ever remain in that deplorable state: And he that is under the prevailing defilement of sin, Let him never be cured of his loathsome disease: And on the other hand, he that is righteous before God for justification to eternal life, and appears to be so by his fruits of righteousness, Let him stand for ever justified in his presence: And he that is renewed and sanctified by the Holy Spirit, Let him be for ever *holy, without blemish, spot, or wrinkle, or any such thing.* (Eph. v. 27.) What every one now is, he shall be unchangeably, for misery, or happiness, to all eternity.

12 And, behold, I come quickly; and my reward *is* with me, to give every man according as his work shall be.

12 And the more strongly to assure the church of this, and to impress them with it, for their encouragement and joy, Behold, said the blessed Jesus again, (see *ver.* 7.) I am speedily coming at the appointed time, which shall not tarry, but hastens apace to bring all things to their final issue. And according to ancient prophecies of my coming with my reward, (*Isa.* xl. 10. and lxii. 11.) I, who as Mediator and Judge of the whole world, have all power in heaven and earth, will then distribute rewards of grace to the righteous and holy, and inflict condign punishment on the unrighteous

NOTE.

* As *Christ* had spoke, *ver.* 7; so in this and the next verse, (unless we make them and *ver.* 8, 9. a parenthesis) *the same person* seems to be the speaker, who again said, *Behold I come quickly*, &c. *ver.* 12. And the things here delivered are the more solemnly inforced, on supposition of their being pronounced immediately by the Lord Jesus himself, as giving the charge that this *revelation* should be made known for the use of the church, and as foretelling the condition of sinners and saints, in consequence of it; (*ver.* 11.) which some, taking the *imperative* for the *future* tense, consider as a *prophecy* of the different effects that this revelation would have upon them respectively; while others (to whom I incline) consider it as a *sentence* that will fix their state and temper at the *final judgment.*

every one *according* to the nature and proportion of *what he has done in his body*, whether it be *good or bad*, (2 Cor. v. 10.) as it shall then be found to be.

13 I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end, the first and the last.

13 And still further to confirm all this, beyond doubt, he again asserted his own divine and mediatorial characters, as he had before, (*chap.* i. 8, 11. see the note on *ver.* 8. there) saying, As the *Greek* alphabet begins with *Alpha*, and ends with *Omega;* so all dispensations of providence and grace, as well as the creation itself, begin and end in me, as the Author and Finisher of them; and I, who eternally existed before them, and shall do so unchangeably after them, will give them their final period at my second coming.

14 Blessed *are* they that do his commandments, that they may have right to the tree of life, and may enter in through the gates into the city.

14 Then it shall appear with uncontroulable evidence, that they are, and for ever shall be, unspeakably happy, who conscientiously attend to, and, from a principle of faith and love, sincerely observe the commandments of God, in all moral obedience, together with all gospel institutions, and the duties which the Lord Jesus has enjoined in this prophetic book, who will be their judge at the last day, that they, being hereby proved to be my true and faithful disciples, may have the dignity and authority (ἐξουσια) by my free grant, (*chap.* ii. 7.) and it may be lawful for them to partake of all the great and glorious blessings that are produced by the tree of life; (see the paraphrase on *ver.* 2.) and, in consequence thereof, may have admission through the gates, which are ever open for them, and them only, to enter into the city of God above. (*Chap.* xxi. 21, 25.)

15 For without *are* dogs, and sorcerers, and whoremongers, and murderers, and idolaters, and whosoever loveth and maketh a lie.

15 For the wicked and ungodly of every character shall be shut out, and utterly excluded from all the honours and delightful entertainments of this glorious city; as particularly, such sinners and antichristian enemies, as for their impurities, opposition to the truth, and persecutions of the saints, may be likened to filthy, fierce, and voracious dogs, (see *Matth.* vii. 6. and *Phil.* iii. 2.) as also pretenders to conjuring and witchcraft; and unclean persons, that addict themselves to fornication, or adultery; and blood-thirsty murderers, that maliciously and unlawfully take away the life of others, or persecute any to death for righteousness sake; and worshippers of images and false gods, or of the true God by external symbols contrary to his institution; and whoever he be that contrives, has pleasure in, and designedly utters any falsehood to impose upon, and deceive his fellow-creatures; all which may be reckoned among the notoriously abounding crimes of the popish party: Whosoever

lives and dies under the guilt of any of these sins shall *be cast into outer darkness, where shall be weeping and gnashing of teeth.* (Matth. xxii. 13. See also *Rev.* xxi. 8.)

16 I Jesus have sent mine angel to testify unto you these things in the churches, I am the root and the offspring of David, *and* the bright and morning star.

16 Then the Lord Jesus, to satisfy me that I was under no delusion, and to add the greater weight and authority to all that I had seen and heard, directed his words to me, saying, I Jesus, the sovereign Lord of angels, and the Lord God of the prophets; (see the paraphrase on *ver.* 6.) it is I myself who employed my angelic messenger to communicate all these things to you, that they may be declared, as a testimony from me (επι ταις εκκλησιαις) concerning the churches, and in and among them of this and all succeeding generations to the end of the world. I, who have done this, neither will, nor can deceive you: For I, as God, am the Root, Lord, and Source of *David*'s family and kingdom; and, as man, am *David*'s son, truly descended from his loins: (*Matth.* xxii. 42,—45.) And, as was prophesied of the Messiah, (*Numb.* xxiv. 17.) I *am the star out of* Jacob, like the bright and morning-star, and the *Sun of righteousness*, shining in all my glory; (*Malach.* iv. 2.) I have arose to put a total end to the night of antichristianism, and to scatter all the darkness of ignorance and error, sin and sorrow; and to usher in an eternal day of light, purity, and joy, with unclouded lustre.

17 And the Spirit and the bride say, Come. And let him that heareth, say, Come. And let him that is athirst, come: And whosoever will, let him take the water of life freely.

17 And as these are matters of the greatest consequence, for assuring the people of God of the certain destruction of all their enemies, and of their own complete and eternal salvation, the Spirit of prophecy hereby testifies his approbation of it, and doth the same, as he is the Holy Spirit that speaks in the hearts of believers; and they, the Lamb's wife, inclusive of the church-militant and triumphant, say with earnest desire and expectation, *Come, Lord Jesus*, (ver. 20.) in all thy glory, to fulfil thy gracious promises, and solemnize the marriage with thine espoused bride. (*Chap.* xxi. 2, 9.) And let every one that hears, understands, and believes the things contained in this prophecy, join with the Spirit and bride in saying, *Come, Lord Jesus:* And let every one that thirsts after righteousness, and after the everlasting happiness, which shall be brought to the church at the revelation of Jesus Christ, (1 *Pet.* i. 13.) come by faith to him for these most excellent of all blessings: And whosoever is inclined and desirous to be made partaker of them, let him come and welcome, to refresh his weary soul by drinking *gratis*, without money and without price, of the ever-flowing and overflowing water of life,

life, which ſprings from him, (*chap.* xxi. 6.) and will be a fountain of all divine conſolation, in its utmoſt fulneſs for ever, at his ſecond coming to complete the prophecies of this book, which are to be believed, juſt as they are here revealed.

18 For I teſtify unto every man that heareth the words of the prophecy of this book, If any man ſhall add unto theſe things, God ſhall add unto him the plagues that are written in this book:

18 For I, the divine Author of this revelation, (*ver.* 20.) and *the faithful and true Witneſs*, (chap. iii. 14.) do ſolemnly declare to every one that hears the prophecies contained in this book, relating to the affairs of the church and the world, which ſhall end in the final deſtruction of mine enemies, and the complete ſalvation of my people, If any one, be his character what it will, ſhall preſume to add any pretended viſions or revelations contrary to theſe; or ſhall wilfully pervert their meaning, by putting falſe interpretations upon them, God will certainly inflict upon him the dreadful puniſhments, that are threatened in this book, and particularly all thoſe that are denounced againſt impoſtors and deceivers.

19 And if any man ſhall take away from the words of the book of this prophecy, God ſhall take away his part out of the book of life, and out of the holy city, and *from* the things which are written in this book.

19 And if, on the contrary, any one ſhall dare to detract from, or go about wilfully to explain away, ſet aſide, or nullify any part of the writings, or of the things written in this prophetic book, or ſhall perverſely deny its divine authority, God, in his juſt reſentment, will certainly cut him off from the intereſt that he profeſſed, or hoped, or *ſeemed to have*, (Luke viii. 18.) in the Lamb's book of life; (*chap.* xxi. 27.) and from all the bleſſings of the heavenly and holy *Jeruſalem*, and all the great and glorious things, which are promiſed in this prophetic book to them *that overcome*, and *are faithful unto death;* (chap. ii. 7, 10, 17. and iii. 5, 12, 21.) he ſhall be for ever excluded from them: All which may be conſidered as a ſolemn and awful ſanction to confirm, not only the divine authority of this book, but of the whole of the New Teſtament-revelation, as it cloſes its canon, in like manner, as *Moſes* guarded the divine authority of the law, (*Deut.* iv. 2. and xii. 32.) and as God himſelf did the like, in cloſing up the canon of the Old Teſtament. (*Malach.* iv. 4.)

20 He which teſtifieth theſe things, ſaith, Surely I come quickly. Amen. Even ſo, come, Lord Jeſus.

20 The Lord Jeſus, who is the Author of the whole of this revelation, and ſo ſolemnly confirms it, (*ver.* 18, 19.) ſays, for the encouragement and comfort of the church under all their intermediate trials and afflictions, I am certainly coming, without delay, as ſoon as ever things are ripe, which will be ere long, for their perfect and everlaſting happineſs, and for the utter deſtruction of all their enemies, at the laſt day. Hereupon I, the writer of theſe prophecies, to expreſs my faith, together with my earneſt deſire and

hope of it, said, *Amen*, in like manner as the whole church should chearfully echo back to his voice, saying, So we rejoice and long to have it, and are fully satisfied it will be, Come, Lord Jesus, in all thy glory; Come quickly, as thou hast said, for our help, deliverance, and complete salvation.

21 The grace of our Lord Jesus Christ *be* with you all. Amen.

21 In the mean while, to conclude the whole with an apostolic benediction, suitable to the state of the church, and to the duties incumbent upon it, during its afflictions and trials on earth, May the free love or favour of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ, and all its special fruits and blessings, richly abound, and be manifested, in all seasonable supplies of grace and strength, support, guidance, and consolation, to all and every one of you in every age, who love, look, and long for his second coming! So may it be! And in testimony of my great desire, hope, and assurance of its being so, I heartily say, and let them all join with me in saying, *Amen*.

RECOLLECTIONS.

What a fulness of joy shall Christ's faithful followers have in the heavenly *Jerusalem*, to banish all their sorrows! There they shall drink at the fountain-head of the water of life, which proceeds from the throne of God and the Lamb, as in the midst of them; and shall be ever feasting on the various, abundant, and delicious fruits of Christ's love and purchase, as the tree of life; and be perfectly free from all maladies of soul and body, and from all the dreadful effects and consequences of the original curse: They shall be publicly known and owned to be the Lord's; and shall dwell in the light of his immediate presence, and behold his face in righteousness, without any cloud or darkness at all. And O with what uninterrupted constancy, chearfulness, and delight, will they then worship, serve, and glorify him! and with what dignity and honour reign with him for ever and ever! How unspeakable is the happiness of those that faithfully observe, and behave in a due correspondence to the prophecies of this book, which is laid open to be read and considered, for the support and comfort of the church under all its present troubles! They who, upon trial, shall be found true believers, by the fruits of their faith, in conscientiously observing the commands of God, shall be authorised and qualified to partake of all the blessedness of the celestial world, and be admitted to an enjoyment of it: But all the wicked and ungodly, of every character, shall be cast into outer darkness. The state and condition of every one shall be finally decided, for happiness, or misery, at Christ's second coming; and they who shall then be unrighteous and defiled, on one hand, or righteous and holy, on the other, shall continue to be so for ever. O solemn thought! How certain and important are these great events! They are testified by the apostle *John*, and by the angel, who conducted him in his visions, as his fellow-servant, but not as an object of religious worship, which is due to God only; yea, by Jesus Christ himself, who introduces the eternal day of light and glory, like the illustrious morning-star; and who as the Lord God of the prophets, sent his angel to communicate these things, and declared, again and again, that he would quickly come to execute them, in judgment and in mercy, till they all shall be fulfilled at the great day of account. How dangerous is it to add to, detract from, pervert, or deny these sacred records, or any other part of the word of God! We should dread doing any thing like either of these, as ever we would escape the torments threatened, and inherit the blessings promised, in this book. And how certainly may we depend on Christ's coming, ere long, with his rewards of justice and grace to every one, according to his works, whether they be good or bad! With a view hereunto he says, *Surely, I come quickly*. And what is the language of the Spirit in his word, and in the hearts

hearts of believers, and their language under his influence, but, *Amen, even ſo come, Lord Jeſus!* In the mean while, How endearing and encouraging are goſpel-invitations to thirſty ſouls to come by faith to Chriſt, and drink at free coſt, and abundantly, of the water of life! That we ſeverally may do ſo, while we are under the diſpenſation of goſpel-grace, May the free love and favour of our Lord Jeſus Chriſt, and every happy fruit and manifeſtation thereof be continually with us all! *Amen.*

AN

AN

ALPHABETICAL TABLE

OF THE

PRINCIPAL THINGS CONTAINED IN THE PARAPHRASE,

And Especially in the NOTES,

OF THIS AND THE FIVE FORMER VOLUMES.

N. B. *p* stands for *paraphrase*, and *n* for *notes*.

A

ABBA, some account of the word, with its signification, *n* Rom. 8. 15.

Abomination of desolation, what so called, and who, *p* and *n* Mat. 24, 15.

Abraham, his attempt to offer up his son vindicated, *n* Heb. 11. 17.

Acceptance of those that in every nation fear God and work righteousness, how to be understood, *n* Acts 10. 35.

Accursed from Christ, in what sense *Paul* wished himself so, *p* and *n* Rom. 9. 3.

Act, not uncommon to put this for the *object* in scripture, *n* chap. 4. 3.

——, judicial of God, in consequence of, and a just punishment for what, *n* John 12. 40.

Adam, a covenant-head, *n* Rom. 5. 14.

—— *and Christ*, one being of the earth earthy, and the other, the Lord from heaven, relates to what, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 47.

Added to the Lord, the import of it, *n* Acts 11. 24.

Address, *Peter*'s and the *Pope*'s very different, *n* 1 Pet. 5. 1.

Adorning, *womens*, what sort thereof condemned, *n* 1 Tim. 2. 9.

Adria, where, *n* Acts 27. 27.

Adultery, *the woman taken in*, an ensnaring question put by the *scribes* and *Pharisees* to Christ about her, *n* John 8. 6.

Ages, three of the world's continuance, according to the *Jews*, *n* 1 Cor. 10. 11.

Agony, Christ's, greater in soul than in body, *n* Luke 22. 44.

Agrippa, Son of *Herod Agrippa*, his good character, *n* Acts 25. 13.

Alexander the copper-smith, *Paul*'s manner of speaking concerning him, no rule for us, *n* 2 Tim. 4. 14.

Alive, the *all* made so in Christ, who they are, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 22.

Alone, in what sense Christ was not so, *n* John 18. 16.

Alpha and Omega, Christ's calling himself so, a strong attestation to his true and proper divinity, *n* Rev. 1. 8.

Altar, at *Athens* by whom set up, *n* Acts 17. 23.

——, the souls that were under it, seems not to allude to the brazen altar, but to the altar of incense, *n* Rev. 6. 9.

Amanuensis, *Paul* often used one, *n* Rom. 16. 22. and Gal. 6. 11.

Amen, pronounced by the *Jewish* church, and by the primitive Christian-church, at the end of the ministers' public thanksgiving and praise, *n* 1 Cor. 14. 16.

Amphipolis, why so called, *n* Acts 17. 1.

Ananias, the High Priest, *Paul*'s reprimand of him how to be considered, *n* Acts 23. 3.

Anathema, *Maranatha*, the signification thereof, *n* 1 Cor. 16. 22.

Ancestors, Christ's, remarks upon them, *n* Matth. 1. 16.

Angel, tutelar or guardian, to every good man, no foundation in scripture for the notion, *n* Acts 12. 15.

——, *another*, Christ so called, *n* Rev. 7. 2. and 8. 3. and 18. 2.

—— *of the church*, who so styled, *n* Luke 4. 17.

Angels, how many appeared to the women at Christ's sepulchre, *n* Mat. 28.

5. and whether they did not appear to them alſo at another time, *n* John 20. 2.

Angel, Chriſt's not taking on him their nature explained, *n* Heb. 2. 16.

—— why Chriſt's pre-eminence above them proper to be inſiſted on, *n* Heb. 1. 4.

—— the elect, not judges, but witneſſes, *n* 1 Tim 5. 21.

Anger, in its own nature not ſinful, *n* Eph. 4. 26.

—— when ſinful or not *p* and *n* Mat. 5. 22.

Antioch, two places ſo called, *n* Acts 13. 14.

Antipas, uncertain who he was, *n* Rev. 2. 13.

Antonia, the caſtle of, how ſituated, *n* Acts 21. 36.

Aphoriſms, why choice ſentences ſo called, *n* Rom. 1. 1.

Apoſtates, ſtrong expreſſions of good that may have been found in them, *n* 2 Pet. 2. 20.

Apoſtles, ſignify what; have no ſucceſſors to their ſpecial characters, privileges, and powers, *n* Rom. 1. 1.

Appearances, Chriſt's to his diſciples after his reſurrection, not *all* taken notice of by any inſpired writer, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 4.

Areopagus, an *Athenian* court of judicature, *n* Acts 17. 19.

Aretas, who, *n* 2 Cor. 11. 32.

Arimathea, *Joſeph* of, not certain who, *n* Luke 23. 51.

Ark, *Noah*'s, the figure and ſize of it, *n* Heb. 11. 7.

——, and the ſafety of thoſe that were in it, prefigured, not baptiſm, but the goſpel-ſalvation, *n* 1 Pet. 3. 20.

Arm of the Lord, what it ſignifies, *n* John xii. 38.

Arms, *Roman* law of, *n* 2 Tim. 2. 4.

Armour, why none for the back, *n* Eph. 6. 14.

—— *of righteouſneſs*, what meant by it, *p* and *n* 2 Cor. 6. 7.

Article, its being left out before the word *God*, an objection of little weight, *n* John 1. 1.

Aſcenſion, Chriſt's, was by his own power, *n* chap. 20. 17.

——. not ſwift but gradual, why, *n* Acts 1. 10.

—— *into heaven*, the *Socinian* ſenſe of it exploded, *n* John 3. 13.

Aſia, the leſſer, what and where, *n* 1 Pet. 1. 1.

Aſſes, rode upon by judges and kings of *Iſrael*, by *David*, and by Chriſt himſelf, *n* Mat. 21. 5.

Attained, different ſenſes of the word, *n* Phil. 3. 12.

Auguſtine, the famous, what text he was converted by reading and reflecting upon, *n* Rom. 13. 13.

Authority, *Paul*'s equal to *Peter*'s, *n* Gal. 2. 11.

B

Baal, *an idol* of the *Sidonians*, *n* Rom. 11. 4.

Babler, what the critics ſay about its meaning, *n* Acts 17. 18.

Balances, a pair of, emblematical of affliction, *n* Rev. 6. 5.

Baptiſm, the mode of it, *p* and *n* Mat. 3. 6.

—— large quantity of water not neceſſary to, *n* Mark 14. 22.

—— *John*'s and the Chriſtian, wherein they agree, and wherein they differ, *n* Luke 3. 16.

—— not adminiſtered by Chriſt himſelf, for what reaſon, *n* John 4. 2.

—— of *John*, what it relates to, *n* Acts 1. 22.

—— of the Eunuch, where, *n* chap. 8. 36.

—— Infant and adult, conſiſtent in different circumſtances under the goſpel-ſtate, *n* chap. 10. 47.

—— why not ſaid to be adminiſtered to *Gentile* proſelytes in the inſtituted form, *n* chap. 2. 38. and 10. 48.

—— the mode of it not ſignified by our being buried with Chriſt, *n* Rom. 6. 4. and *n* Col. 2. 12.

Baptized, how *Iſrael* were ſo in the cloud and in the ſea, *n* 1 Cor. 10. 2.

Baptizing the houſhold, what meant by it, *n* chap. 1. 16.

Barnabas, an apoſtle, and *Saul*'s fellow-pupil under *Gamaliel*, *n* Acts 9. 27.

Beaſt, his number, very difficult to ſettle, *n* Rev. 13. 18.

Beaſts, the apoſtle's fighting with them at *Epheſus*, differently explained, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 32.

Beelzebub, its ſignification, *n* Luke 11. 15.

Beginning, *in the*, how underſtood by the *Socinians*, *n* John 1. 1.

—— *choſen from the*, what it means, *n* 2 Theſſ. 2. 13.

Belial, its ſignification, *n* 2 Cor. 6. 15.

Believers, equally God the Father's, Chriſt's, and the Holy Ghoſt's property, *n* 1 Cor. 6. 20.

Bereans, of a religious ſpirit before *Paul* preached to them, *n* Acts 17. 11.

Bernice, a lady of no good character, *n* chap. 25. 13.

Bethany, from whence Chriſt aſcended, where it was, *n* Luke 24. 50.

Biſhops,

Bishops, or pastors, to attend the spiritual, and deacons the temporal concerns of the church. *n* Rom. 12. 7.
—— Christian, who, *n* 1 Pet. 5. 2.
—— the same with elders, *n* Phil 1. 2.
Blasphemy, against the Holy Ghost, what, *p* and *n* Mat. 12. 3. and *n* Acts 13. 45.
Blessing God, our, how different from his blessing us, *n* Eph. 1. 3.
Blood, moon turned into, metaphorical, *n* Acts 2. 20.
Blood, the eating of it, not in its own nature sinful, why forbid, *n* Acts 15. 20.
—— the manner of sprinkling it, *n* Heb. 9. 19.
—— of the paschal Lamb, the sprinkling of it, a temporary ordinance, *n* chap. 11. 28.
—— of *Abel*, what intended thereby, *n* chap. 12. 24.
Body, Christ's, did not penetrate the door of the room where the disciples were assembled, *n* Luke 24. 37.
—— *of this death*, the apostle's meaning by it, *n* Rom. 7. 24.
—— sins without it, what they are, *n* 1 Cor. 6. 18.
—— *Paul*'s keeping it under, no argument for Popish penances, *n* chap. 9. 27.
——, future rewards and punishments to to be received by that, as well as by the soul, *n* 2 Cor. 5. 10.
—— *in one*, what meant by it, *n* Eph. 2. 16.
—— *a, hast thou prepared* me, how reconciled with *Ps.* 40. 6. *n* Heb. 10. 5.
Bondage, great confidence in the *Jews* to say they never were in any, *n* John 8. 33.
Bone, of the paschal lamb not to be broken, prefigured what, *n* chap. 19. 36.
Book, *the volume of*, its meaning, *n* Heb. 10. 7.
Books, of the ancients, different in form from ours, *n* Rev. 5. 1.
Born out of due time, in what sense *Paul* was so, *n* 1 Cor. 15. 8.
Bosom, *Abraham*'s what the meaning of it, *n* Luke 16. 22.
Bottles, formerly made of leather, *n* Mark 2. 22.
Branch, grafting it with its buds, what it intimates, *n* Rom. 11. 17.
Branches, withered, what men's gathering them signifies, *n* John 15 6.
Bread, and daily bread, what, *n* Mat. 6. 11.
—— eating of it in the kingdom of God, a metaphor signifying the advantages of religion here; and the blessedness of heaven hereafter, *n* Luke 14. 15.
Bread, called Christ's body, as the paschal supper was the *passover*, *n* chap. 22. 19.
—— breaking of it, an expression of different significations, *n* Acts 2. 46.
Brethren, Christ's who, *n* Mat. 12 46.
—— when Christ first directly called his disciples so, *n* John 20. 17.
—— a term not always used by *Paul* with respect to the same sort of persons, *n* Acts 23. 4.
Brightness of the Father's glory, what intimated by Christ's being styled so, *n* Heb. 1. 13.
Built all things, the meaning of it, *n* chap. 3. 4.
Bull, a severe one of Pope *Martin*'s, *n* Rev. 13. 17.
Buried with Christ, what it relates to, *n* Col. 2. 12.

C

Cæsar, the prudence of *Paul* in appealing to him, *n* Acts 26. 32.
Caiaphas, his prophecy, the extent of it, *n* John 11. 51.
Cainan, why inserted by *Luke*, *n* Luke 3. 36.
Calling upon the name of the Lord, applied to Christ, *n* Acts 2. 21.
—— *of God according to his purpose*, what it relates to, *n* Rom. 8. 28.
—— *your*, what meant by it, *n* 1 Cor. 1. 26.
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Candlestick, the weight and form of it, *n* Heb. 9. 2.
Captains of the temple, who, *n* Luke 22. 52. and *n* Acts 4. 1.
Carnal, believers not absolutely, but comparatively so, *n* 1 Cor. 3. 1.
Carpenter's trade, Christ said to work at it, *n* Luke 2. 51.
Cast away, *Paul* in no doubt about his being so, *n* 1 Cor. 9. 27.
Castor and Pollux, some account of them, *n* Acts 28. 11.
Caves, usual burying places, *n* John 11. 38.
Cedron, the brook, where it ran; *David*, a type of Christ went over it, *n* chap. 18. 1.
Censer, golden, what, and its use, *n* Heb. 9. 4.
Centurion, his office what; and whether he came to Christ in person or not, *p* and *n* Mat. 8. 5. and *p* Luke 7. 3.
—— probably engaged in family prayer, when the angel appeared to him, *n* Acts 10. 30.
Chaining prisoners, the *Roman* way of doing it, *n* chap. 12. 6.

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Chaſte. *Paul*'s ſtyle remarkably ſo, *n* chap. 7. 5.
Cherubim, what made of, and in what manner placed; their form uncertain, *n* Heb. 9. 5.
Children, little, why brought to Chriſt, *n* Matth. 19. 14. and Mark 10. 13.
—— *my little*, moſtly a term of tenderneſs and endearment, rather than a diſtinction of younger and weaker from older and ſtronger believers, *n* 1 John 2. 1.
—— *and ſervants*, Chriſtian, how far to obey their heathen parents or maſters, *n* Col. 3. 20.
Chooſing and calling, God's, particular perſons to eternal life, intimated, *n* *Rom.* 9. 24.
—— *and predeſtinating*, what they may ſeverally relate to, *n* *Eph.* 1. 5.
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—— *over all, God bleſſed for ever*, *n* Rom. 9. 5.
—— the Lord, whom we are not to provoke to jealouſy, *n* 1 Cor. 10. 22.
—— *myſtical*, the meaning of the expreſſion, *n* chap. 12. 12.
—— the only proper, vital, influential, and authoritative head of the church, *n* ibid. ver. 21.
—— included in the living God, *n* 2 Cor. 3. 3.
—— cured diſtempers in a god-like way, *p* and *n* Mark 7. 34.
—— a ſin-offering, *n* chap. 5. 21.
—— *raiſed up*, &c. *in him*, what it relates to, *n* Eph. 2. 6.
—— *that which I have committed to him*, how to be underſtood, *n* 2 Tim. 1. 12.
Chriſtian, probably the new name, which the mouth of the Lord named by immediate ſuggeſtion, *p* and *n* Acts 11. 26.
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—— at *Jeruſalem*, the mother-church under the goſpel-ſtate, *n* chap. 18. 22.
—— the meaning of the word, *n* chap. 15. 32.
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I

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—— the first time of *Paul*'s going thither after his conversion, *n* Gal. 1. 18.

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—— *new*, coming down from God out of heaven, how to be understood, *n* Rev. 21. 2.

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—— his hanging himself, and falling headlong and bursting asunder in the midst, accounted for, *p* Acts 1. 18. and *n* Mat. 27. 5.

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—— actual and personal from eternity, not asserted on better grounds than actual and personal glorification, *n* chap. 8. 30.

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K

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—— *going to*, about matters of considerable importance, with a Christian temper, not absolutely to be condemned, *n* 1 Cor. 6. 1.

—— in what sense judaizing Christians did not keep it, *n* Gal. 6. 13.

—— *perfect of liberty*, what, *n* James 1. 25.

—— not made for a righteous man, in what sense, *n* 1 Tim. 1. 9.

—— *delivered from* it, how to be understood, *n* Rom. 7. 6.

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—— *Rahab*'s officious one, by no means justifiable, *n* Heb. 11. 31.

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—— *he shall give him*, the meaning of it, *n* 1 John 5. 16.

—— *tree of*, alludes to what, *n* Rev. 22. 2.

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—— natural, are said to live only five summer months, *n* Rev. 9. 5.

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—— *of glory*, why Christ so called, *n* 1 Cor. 2. 8.

—— *and God*, both titles applicable to Christ, *n* 1 Cor. 8. 6.

—— *that bought them*, the meaning of it, *n* 2 Pet. 2. 1.

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—— always observed by the apostles, though they often went to the synagogues of the *Jews* on their sabbath, why, Acts 13. 14.

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—— *inner*, the meaning of it, *n* Rom. 7. 22.
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—— Christ, being styled so as Mediator, no argument against his being also God, *n* 1 Tim. 2. 5.
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—— *Magdalen's* not knowing Jesus accounted for, and natural for her to think him the gardener, *n* chap. 20. 14, 15.
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—— Christ's glory manifested thereby, *n* John 2. 11. and *n* 11. 41. and *n* Acts 9. 40.
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—— *Peter's*, when *Cornelius* fell down at his feet, *n* Acts 10. 25.
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O

Oaths, have a reference to God, and are binding, *n* Mat. 23. 20.
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Office, prieſtly, Chriſt did not die out of it, *n* Heb. 7. 16.
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—— an ordinance formerly for the miraculous cure of the ſick, but not to be uſed now for that purpoſe, or by way of extreme unction, *n* James 5. 14.
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—— and Chriſt's *doing nothing of himſelf*, how to be underſtood, ibid. 20.
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—— and ſynagogues, the difference between them, *n* Acts 16. 13.
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P

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Part, to have none with another, the meaning of it, *n* John 13. 8.
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——'s, primacy, the church at *Jeruſalem* had no notion of it, *n* Acts 15. 23.
——'s name being generally mentioned before the other apoſtles, no argument of his ſupremacy, *n* chap. 18. 18.
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—— *of God toward them that believe*, how to be taken, *p* and *n* Eph. 1. 19.
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—— Christ's, not restrained to the apostles only, *n* John 17. 6.
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—— and *Levites*, a great number at *Jericho*, *n* Luke 10. 30.
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